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BRITISH MX GP
Archive action

#77

CLASSIC DIRTBIKE

ISSUE
Seventy-seven
Winter 2025

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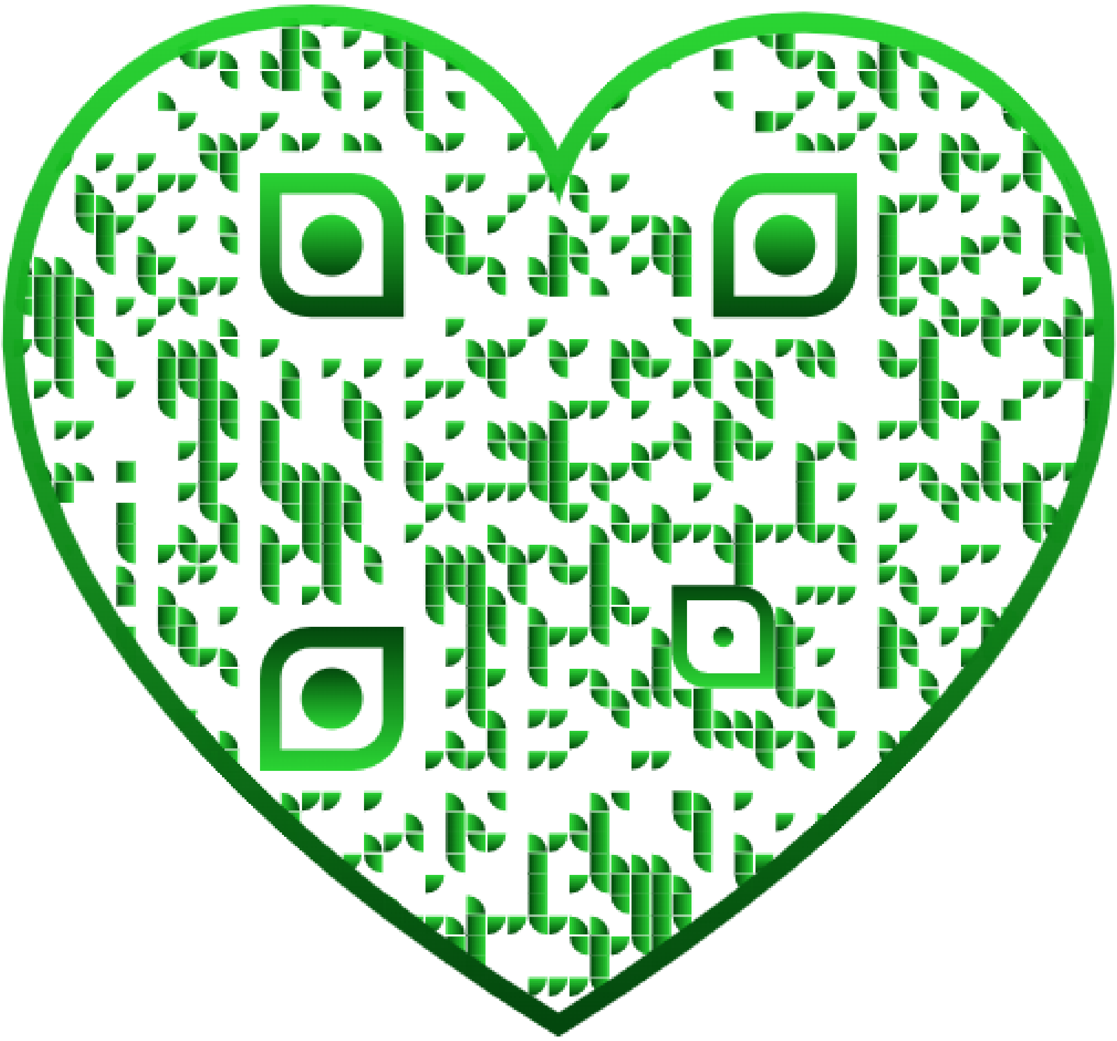

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Transferable skills

To learn a skill is a fine thing, to put a skill to use is even finer.

> *❝ …riding skills are pretty much multi-discipline and advice from then-MX world champion Jeff Smith to new scramblers was to ride trials…❞*

Sometimes the catalyst to a column comes from an outside source completely unconnected with the subject matter of this magazine, which is how the phrase 'transferable skills' popped up. I'll admit to being a fan of local radio and when out and about in the motorcycle conveyance, will listen to the local station here in the northeast. On the breakfast show there were discussions going on about skills needed for a variety of occupations, and one caller mentioned how he'd found the skills he'd used in one industry were of use when he moved elsewhere. In reply, presenter lad said "…sort of transferable skills then…", a comment which reminded me that here in our world, skills were indeed transferable.

From there I began to wonder what sort of skills actually were of multi-use across the motorcycling board. Obviously, a lot of riding skills are pretty much multi-discipline and advice from then-MX world champion Jeff Smith to new scramblers was to ride trials first. His point being the motorcycle control, balance and terrain-reading skills learnt in trials would transfer to the much faster sport of scrambling or MX and the introduction would be in a less frenetic environment. This was borne out by Jeff himself who was also a top trials rider with national and international wins to his credit. Less obvious of a transferable skill is when sport goes sideways as with speedway or grass track. Here, too though, throttle control and balance are important skills for a participant to have, and a novice rider who has experienced a variety of terrain will gain confidence much faster.

The more I looked into this 'transferable skills' lark, the clearer it was to me of how much benefit to road riding were the skills learnt in the dirty world. Yes, the metalled road surfaces of the public highways are a lot smoother than the tracks and terrain encountered in a trial, scramble or enduro – or should be, but given the state of some roads it's a questionable statement – but the amount of times I've heard road riders with no off-road experience claim "…the bike just went…" as they clatter to the ground. Some form of off-road skill would perhaps have made a coming to earth less inevitable when the bike just goes…

Mind you, there are times when off-road skills are of little help at all and I wear the scar on my thumb where it was reset after an incident involving a road bike, a roundabout and a patch of diesel… such things happen. However, interesting surface conditions can be dealt with and while ice and snow have their intricacies and need particular skills to cope with, there is a similar feeling encountered when on wet grass. Most trials riders in hilly areas will have had the interesting experience of coming down a fellside and feeling the bike break away under braking and the speed increasing. The skill to learn here is accelerate while braking… brakes only slow vehicles down if the wheels are turning. It is a difficult skill to convince yourself of, but it works… with drum brakes at least.

There are other skills which can be applicable to our scene, ones which don't actually involve riding but are more use to the aftermath of riding. Yes, we're talking workshop skills. There will be little doubt that if your skill set has been learned working on automotive things then you'll have a bit of a head start when it comes to wielding spanners and having the confidence to tackle work on whatever motorcycle you have. It also means there will be a few more tools to hand which accompany your skills. Someone who has gone through an engineering apprenticeship, too, will have a multitude of skills which can transfer over to the world of motorcycles. Perhaps though, one skill not learnt in an engineering apprenticeship is one which should be in the curriculum… the skill to either say 'no' as the increasing number of 'friends' an engineer acquires once it is known said engineer has engineering equipment to hand, or to be 'out' when 'friends' call the night before an event with a bit which needs "…a couple of minutes in your lathe…" or some such machine.

Even my own practical skills gained in the world of woodworking and joinery can transfer over to the motorcycling world to a certain extent. Building a workshop, for instance, is relatively easy to do, as is fitting it out with a workbench or six, and while I do have a hydraulic bike bench – two actually, since the lads in the garage over the road fitted an extra car ramp and their bike ramp was in the way – for a considerable number of years a used a wooden bench to lift my bike up to a comfortable working height. Comments from people who said things like "Wrong height for me, ha-ha" about it were met with "It's alright for me…" replies. Sometimes though, certain skills are overtaken by technology. In my case, serving my apprenticeship near a steelworks brought the assumption I would have to make patterns for casting things. However, as far as motorcycle parts are concerned, these days 3D printing has largely made this skill less transferable. cdb

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See page 42 for details.**

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With crowds of thousands and famous venues, the British MC GPs were a big thing. We look at two from the sixties.

34 Something very special
JAP engines have a race reputation other engines envy… just not in MX. But when has such a fact stopped people winning?

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Just a few bits and pieces to do on bikes in the workshop. Sometimes the small tasks take the time.

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…Leven Valley Two Day Trial as the feet-up world heads for Scotland.

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The Drumlanrig Festival of MotorSport in Dumfries where scrambling, trials and classic concours happened.

70 Classic Mechanics Show
The Stafford County Showground hosts a couple of classic shows. October is the turn of later motorcycles.

On the cover
In 1986, Dave Thorpe took this factory Honda to victory in the world MX series. It was his second championship, and he would win one more, but the 1986 bike represented the end of an era. Due to rule changes in the sport, this Honda was the end of the ‘money no object’ factory bikes where every part was special, handcrafted in the pursuit of excellence.

DIRTNEWS

Want to tell us about a forthcoming event, or have any other dirt bike news to share? Email CDBEditor@mortons.co.uk or track down the editor at a dirt bike show or event.

Telford '26 - line-up of legends

Three huge names in the off-road scene have been confirmed for The Classic Dirt Bike Show, taking place on 7-8 February, 2026, at the Telford International Centre. Known for attracting some of the biggest names in the industry, next year's show is set to be no exception.

Vic Allan has been announced as the first Guest of Honour. Vic was crowned double British MX Champion in the 250cc and 500cc classes in 1974 - the only rider ever to achieve this remarkable double.

Joining him will be Roger Harvey, who will share stories from a racing career spanning almost two decades. The 1983 British 125cc MX Champion is a true motocross veteran who went on to lead Honda's motocross programme and now serves as an advisor for Honda HRC.

Also on stage throughout the weekend will be Sammy Miller, 11-time British Trials Champion and two-time European Trials Champion. Sammy will discuss his lifelong dedication to motorcycling - a career that has spanned multiple disciplines, including trials, enduro, road racing, motocross, sand racing and grass track.

Visitors can catch Vic, Roger and Sammy live on stage across the weekend, hosted by John McCrink.

The annual off-road celebration also will feature a vast range of trade and autojumble stalls, offering everything from merchandise and clothing to tools, parts, and even complete machines. It's the perfect opportunity to get kitted out for the season ahead!

Vic Allan in action as reigning British MX champion.

Sammy Miller in action in a very wet SSDT.

Tickets and info

Ticket price information:
Discounted advance ticket price*:
- Adult: £16.75
- Under-16s: Free with an accompanying adult

*Discounted advance tickets close 8.30am Monday, 2 February, 2026.

On-the-gate prices:
- Adult: £21
- Under-16s: Free with an accompanying adult

Show opening times:
Autojumble opens 9am, show halls open 10am
For more information about The Classic Dirt Bike Show and to save 20% on advance tickets, visit www.classicbikeshows.com

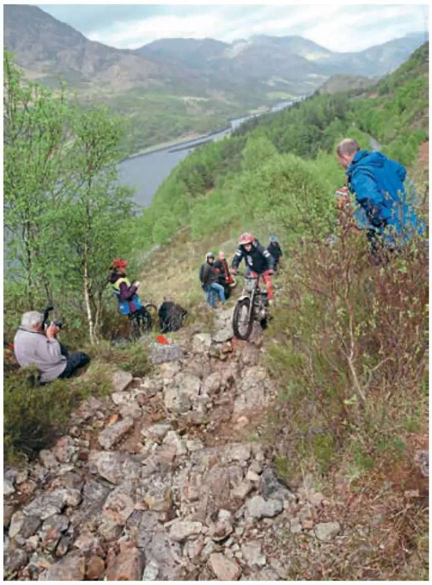
Easter Action

For enthusiasts far and wide, the arrival of Easter means not eggs and bunnies, but Red Marley classic motorcycle hill climb action on Easter Monday. The location is Walsgrove Farm, Great Witley in Worcestershire (WR6 6JJ). This off-beat event has been a feature of West Midlands sport for the best part of a century, although it suffered a hiatus in 1971 before being relaunched for the Millennium Celebrations. The format is quite simple. There is a dirt hill which becomes progressively steeper. Up to four riders leave the start and the first two over the line go through to the next round. Naturally, there are a number of classes and eligibility has developed over the years, so, for the latest scoop go to www.redmarleyhillclimb.co.uk

Yes, the hill is steep, you just have to keep going.

Pre65 Scottish

On Caolasnacaon, Italian rider Enzo Afri keeps his 125 Moto Guzzi on the move.



Local lad Tyler Murphy hasn't time to admire the scenery at Caolasnacaon.

With entries flooding into trial HQ, it's a timely reminder that the closing date for those wanting to ride the Pre65 Scottish Two Day Trial on Friday and Saturday, 1-2 May, 2026, you have until Wednesday, 26 November, 2025 to get your entry to the event secretary. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the last time the SSDT started in Edinburgh, Vince Mackintosh will ride a 500T Norton from Edinburgh to Fort William on the Thursday prior to the trial. Vince is tackling this feat to raise money for the Macmillan Cancer Support charity in memory of his late wife Claire and Pre65 merchandise co-ordinator Elaine Gordon, both victims of this disease. There is a donation page at www.justgiving.com/page/vincent-mackintosh-5?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL where donations can be made.

Sealey tool promo

Sealey launches latest Tool Promotion featuring over 90 new products and a mechanic's kit giveaway

Get ready for winter with the latest Tool Promotion from Sealey, featuring over 1570 incredible deals and more than 90 new products. This season's promotion is your go-to source for both everyday workshop essentials and specialist equipment. You'll also find big savings on heating, charging and lighting solutions, ensuring you're equipped for the colder months ahead.

Look out for the gift idea logo throughout the promotion for fantastic gift inspiration, including the new 90-piece Junior Tool Kit, designed to encourage young DIY enthusiasts to develop practical skills through safe, hands-on play. Complete with a sturdy workbench and a wide range of realistic tools, this set not only sparks creativity, but also helps children build confidence, coordination and an early passion for problem-solving – making it an ideal and memorable gift.

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To explore all the new products and exciting discounts, and seize the chance to win this coveted prize, visit www.sealey.co.uk

Head for the Highlands!

Gary Younghusband pilots his 340 Bultaco through one of the rocky stream sections at Alvie.

Recently announced is the popular Highland Classic Two Day Trial, based on the Alvie Estate near Aviemore. The dates for 2026 are 13-14 June. Organised by Inverness DMCC, the trial covers a number of laps, taking in a variety of terrain familiar to riders in the north. Traditionally, the trial has had a theme to each year, and various marques have been celebrated as well as various types of bikes, and for 2026 the trial will celebrate British Four Strokes, though naturally other machines will be accepted, too. Entries open on 1 February, 2026, and are likely to fill up fast. A returning feature is Laird Jamie's Challenge – named for the laird of the estate and will be a one lap per day 20-section class.

Bonanza Time

The 'Bonanza' weekend is a real enthusiasts' weekend limited to 'British Bikes only', where conversations and reminiscences about times gone by are as important, if not more important, than the weekend's trial and scrambles. Held for the second time at Batcombe in Dorset, the 2025 event turned out to be a stellar weekend. There was a mile circuit for the classic and twinshock trial on the Saturday with varied grassy, woodland, muddy (yes, mud!) and stony sections challenging riders on three different routes, whilst in the scramble nine different classes with full grids produced some of the best racing seen on the class scene for many a year. Dates for 2026 are 25-26 July, and the Bonanza club are negotiating to run a grass track as well as the Trial and Scramble on the same weekend at Batcombe, so if you want to get involved or ride then email bonanzaclassicscrambles@gmail.com

Beamish Trophy Trial

An event can consider itself to have 'made it' when it only needs a word or two as introduction… 'The Beamish' is just such an event. The 2025 event was the 52nd running of this traditional road trial taking in 100 miles of the Durham Dales and, for those of an adventurous spirit, some old-fashioned sections, too. We caught up with the trial at its Nenthead lunch stop as riders were leaving and going through the Lunch Control where questions were asked to test one's knowledge.
Want to get involved? Go to www.southdurhamvmcc.co.uk and follow the Beamish links.

A rigid Matchless is almost ideal for the Beamish.

There is something about a bike like this BSA which reflects the patina of time.

Northern British Bike Championship

As they wrap up another successful NBBC trials series, the organisers would like to extend their thanks to the series sponsors Villiers, Drayton and REH Forks. Your support has been invaluable in making this series a success.

Though the trials calendar is becoming increasingly crowded with events, the dedication and enthusiasm of participants for the NBBC series remain unwavering and continued support is greatly appreciated. Equally valued is the hard work and commitment of the event organising clubs. Planning and executing a trial is no small feat; it requires significant time and effort, particularly as land availability becomes more limited. Ensuring that routes are accessible and that sections cater to all skill levels are essential for the enjoyment of all participants. In the interim period while new websites are launched, organisers Gary and George can be contacted at nbbcpre65@gmail.com

NBBC results

Clubman classes:
Pre-unit rigid: C Smith
Pre-unit springer: M Newan
Unit and Two Stroke: M Spencer
50/50 Class
Pre-unit springer: M Mison
Unit and Two Stroke: R Foulkes
Expert Classes
Pre-unit Springer: K Ward
Unit Expert: S Land
Two Stroke: M Spink

NBBC 2026

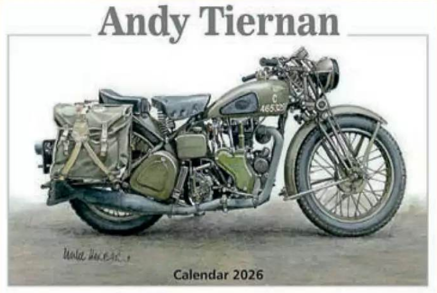
Looking ahead, we are excited to announce the upcoming events in the 2026 season:
Poachers Bag: 29 March
Midland Classic: 12April 12
Sam Cooper: 10 May
Reliance: 7 June
Barry Pickard Trial: 12 July
LLDMC Wales: 9 August
Bowland Classic: 4 October

One of NBBC's co-ordinators George Emmott guides his 500 Triumph over some Scottish rockery.

Gary Marshall's look of concentration is intense as the NBBC co-ordinator steers his TRW away from the bankside.

Make a date

Certainly classic, though not strictly dirt bike, is Andy Tiernan's classic calendar, the artwork of which will brighten up many an enthusiast's wall while raising funds for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. Just in case you didn't know, the calendar is produced in memory of Dave 'Beret' Berry, Andy's mechanic who lost his life in 2006, and for 2026 the subject is Velocette with six superb pieces of artwork by artist Mike Harbar. Check out Mike's website at www.classiclinesartist.com



Andy Tiernan's calendar supports East Anglian Air Ambulance.

The cost depends on where you are and how many you want; for UK purchasers a single calendar will be £12 including postage. For those in the EU a single calendar will be £18 including European postage, while for those in the rest of the world the cost is £21 including overseas postage. Payment is by cheque made payable to East Anglian Air Ambulance, and for those overseas drawn on a UK bank. Alternatively, PayPal can be used AndyTiernanCalendarDonation@outlook.com Andy stresses they cannot take credit or debit cards. If you wish to order multiple copies of the calendar, please obtain a total price first by emailing Andy at AndyTiernanCalendarDonation@outlook.com

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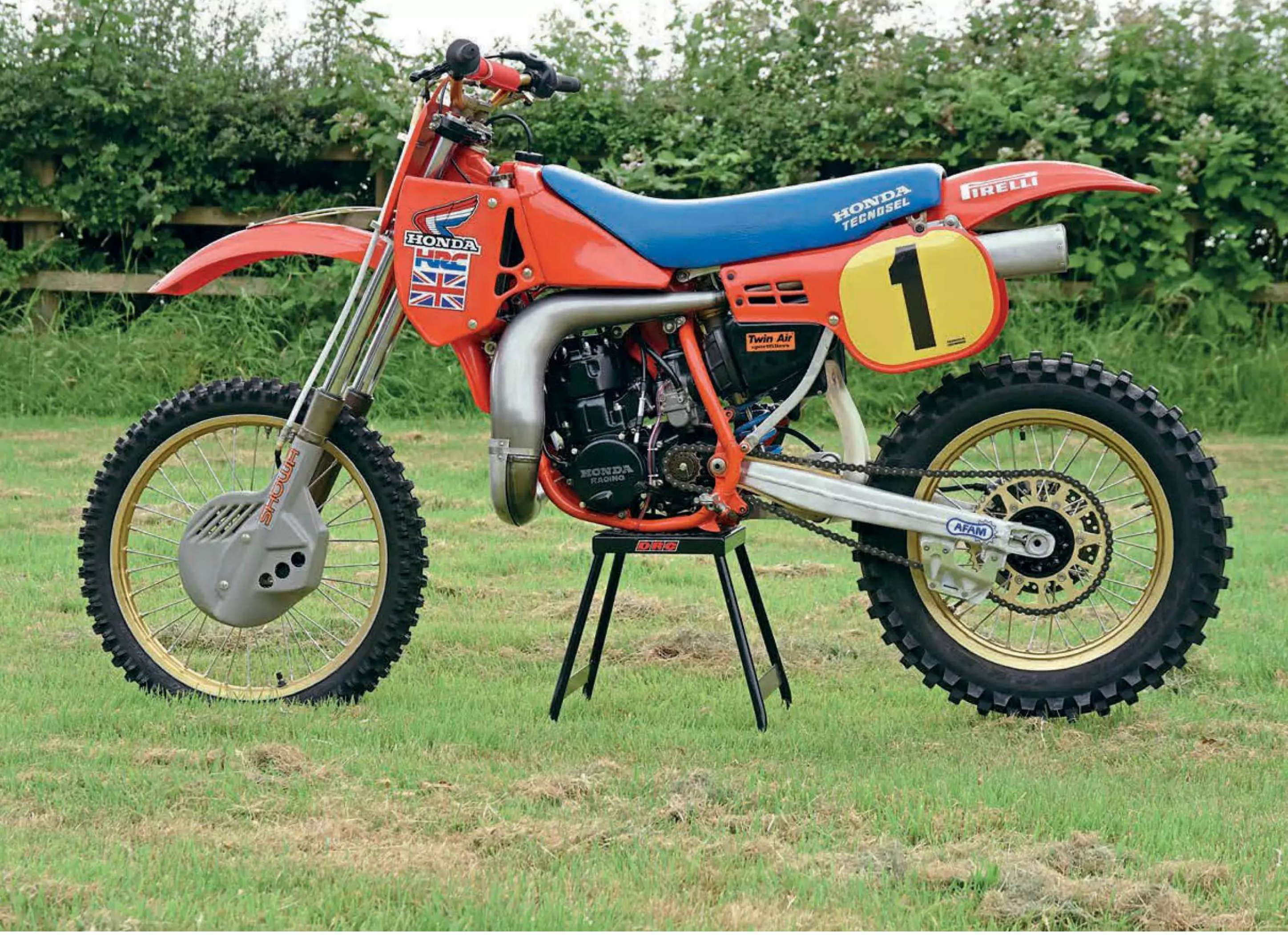

End game

When the rules changed at the end of 1986 it spelt the end for cost-no-object MX works bikes but oh, what an era it had been.

Words and pics: Tim Britton Media Ltd

Let's face it, as we read the papers and magazines of the day we lusted after the works bikes which were being used in whichever was our favourite sport. If only we could get our hands on such kit we'd be champions, too. Nice image to have, isn't it. The incontrovertible fact is that us club riders would be unlikely to use such kit to its best ability as those works bikes were often vastly different to the production machines.

Machines such as this team Honda were handbuilt, tailored to a particular rider – Dave Thorpe in this instance – and at least until the end of the 1986 season were cost-no-object things of beauty and performance built to perform a single task… that of winning a GP and ultimately a world championship. To do so would gain valuable publicity for the factory and, ergo, the production range which often mimicked the works bikes in colour only. History records Dave did become 1986 world 500cc champion and this Honda would have played its part in the win.

It wasn't the only bike Dave would use in the title chase and while technically correct to say 'championship-winning bike', such a statement implies only one machine was used during the whole season when, in actual fact, there were at least four and possibly as many as six versions of the motorcycle in action through the season. According to Dave himself and his dad Keith – aka The Rider and The Mechanic – this Honda is probably an early one, reasoned by a modification to the petrol tank which protected the radiator cap from being knocked off by Dave's knee… again. Though things become a little complicated when it was realised the bikes would be mixed and matched, and components would be swapped between machines to provide the correct spec for whatever GP was next.

The international MX stage is a hard arena for bike and rider, as both have to be at their peak for the results to come, and after each GP the Honda was torn down, meticulously checked and rebuilt ready for the next GP. According to sources, a typical MX GP of 1986 was 40 minutes plus two laps so let's round it up to 50 minutes of riding and engine running per heat… indulge me as I'm generalising here. So, assuming a GP has two heats of 50 minutes plus some practice laps and settling ▶

Above: Handbuilt for a reigning champion to tackle the next championship. Honda's RC500M has hardly a standard part in the mix.

HONDA
HRC
Twin Air sportfilters
HONDA RACING
DRC

in running, then it isn't an unreasonable stretch to say each version of the bike would see less than three hours of running between being freshly built and the end of a GP… world championship is this hard on machines. Mind you, if anyone can confirm my assumptions or equally point out I'm way off course then please do say.

I've wandered off track here a little and at this point we'll revisit the 'totally handbuilt' aspect of this stunning piece of factory exotica. According to those who do know, there's not a single bit of this machine which would be production based except, perhaps, the front mudguard. Imagine this fully. No matter what bit you or me think of on the bike then the answer mostly is, 'Yes, it's made for this bike only…' Giving both production and factory machines a casual glance they do look similar in as much as both are red, both have a blue seat and gold anodised wheel rims, but it's only when a detailed inspection of the works bike is done do differences appear.

Obviously, a factory of Honda's scale can't fit building and maintaining such small-scale runs as a few works bikes into their schedules, but in their wisdom created a racing department which would become HRC where such things could be done, and during each teardown session, improvements and detail changes for the developing season where necessary would be incorporated. I'm reliably informed the team members would be flown out to Japan where they would be fitted with their bikes for the season; nothing, it seems, would be too much trouble in the pursuit of GP success, where some riders preferred a sharp motor, others a softer one. Thorpe, for instance, is quite tall so required a different riding position from Eric Geboers who wasn't so tall. In this way the riders would feel comfortable on their bikes and such attention to detail is where the cost-no-

Left: State-of-the-art engine, liquid-cooled, tailored to Thorpe's requirements with sharpish power

Right: The whole machines were crafted by Honda's racing division HRC… Need a bigger sticker for Honda Racing Corporation to go on.

Below left: Tecnosel made seats for lots of MX teams.

Below right: Rear suspension is Showa, and their technician would keep an eye on the unit between GPs.

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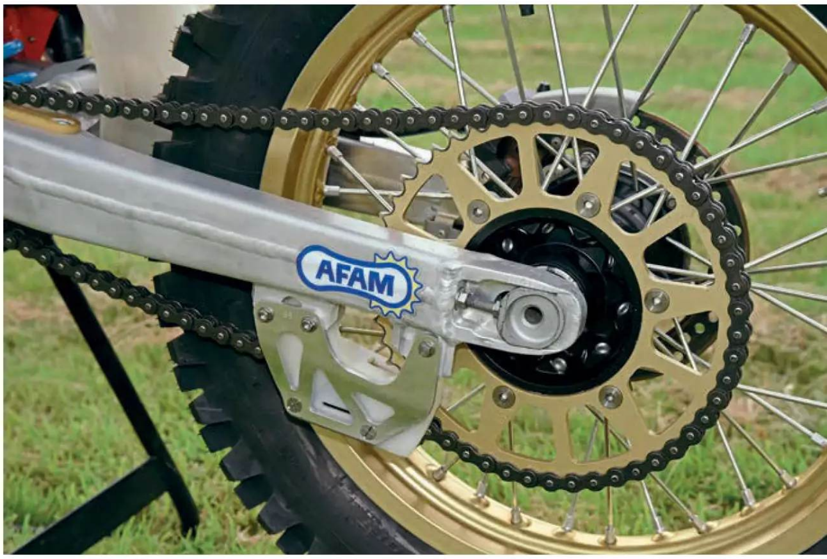


Honda had had problems with rear hubs in previous years but designed a new type and cured all problems. It is of different dimensions to a standard hub; the sprocket, too, won't fit a CR hub.

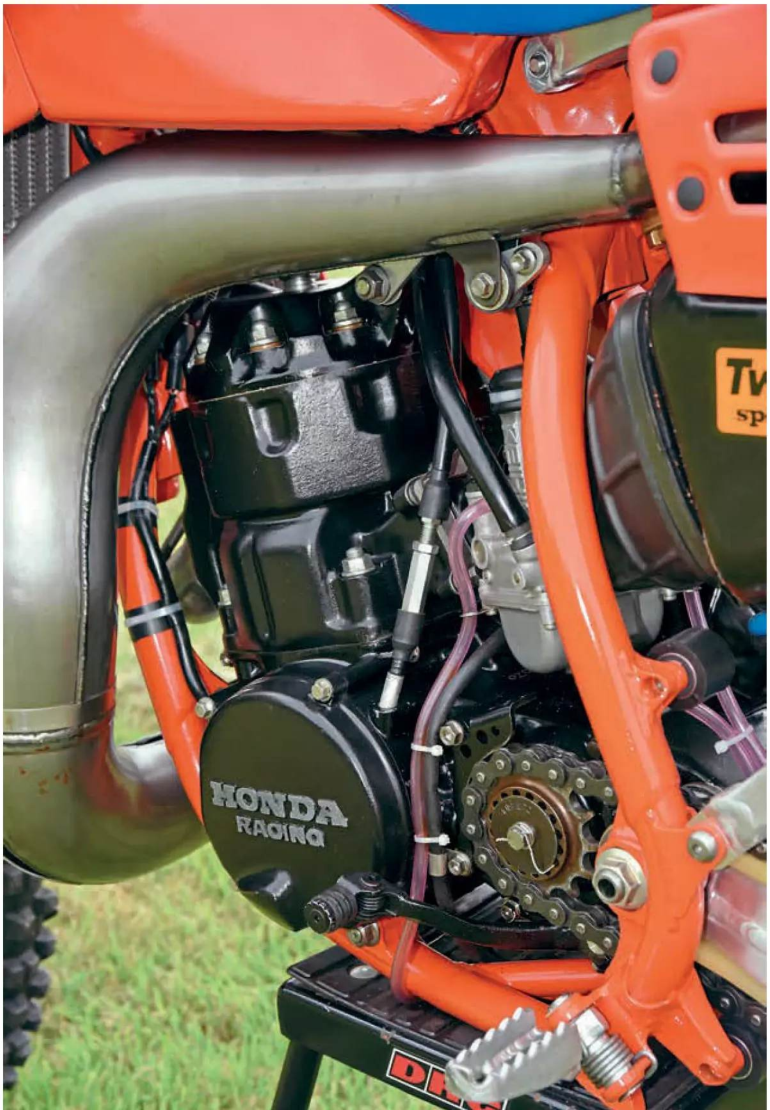
object legend was born. While writing this last sentence I wondered if focussing on the cost aspect of these works machines was the right way to appreciate them. Might it not be better to say the aim is to win and if the right part is a penny or £1000 then cost is secondary to it being the right part? I'll allow though, that the right part likely did cost a lot.

Honda had introduced their production CR500 for 1984; sort of an interim model with an air-cooled engine as the company had a surprise waiting for the clubman world and their 1985 CR500 came with a liquid-cooled engine. Its steel cradle frame wrapped around the engine, had an alloy swinging arm with Pro-Link suspension at the rear, and held a drum-braked wheel, 43mm diameter Showa long forks at the front with a disc brake on the front wheel. Inside the liquid-cooled engine sat a hollow crankshaft, five speed gearbox, and a flat side carburettor fed fuel into the cylinder where electronic ignition made sure it was ignited correctly.

The works bikes also had a steel cradle type frame, though of much lighter material than the production version, and its dimensions were different to the standard machine, too. Don't forget the production bike has to suit a range of rider dimensions while the works bike has to cater for one. The sub-frame for the factory machine is aluminium alloy made in square section material and unbolts from the main frame to make servicing easier. So, too, is the swinging arm aluminium. On the swinging arm, super enthusiast and international MX event organiser Dave King mentioned it was something everyone wanted in the day. "They called it the Coke Bottle because when you see one out on its own it does resemble a Coca-Cola bottle shape; of course, they weren't available…" he says wistfully.

Though there was an option for five speeds in the gearbox, the production bike was five-speed. Dave Thorpe preferred a four-speed box. There was certainly enough power to cope with fewer gears in the box and there is a school of thought which suggests changing gears can slow a rider up. One of the problems all engineers have to deal with where a liquid-cooled engine is concerned is where to mount the radiators. Too high up affects the bike's balance, and Honda were already aware of the high centre of gravity their bikes had and were actively trying to lower it as much as possible. Traditionally, the petrol tank sat atop the frame, but a tank big enough for a thirsty engine and also expected to hold the cooling radiator is a mighty lump, and the last thing a rider needs is fuel sloshing around high up on the machine. You know petrol weighs 7lb an imperial gallon, so assuming the tank capacity is similar to the production machine's 2.2 US gallons, or 8.32791 litres which converts to 1.83 Imperial gallons, and it works out at just under 13lb or 5.9kg for a fuel load, or thereabouts. ▶

Below: Castings are magnesium.



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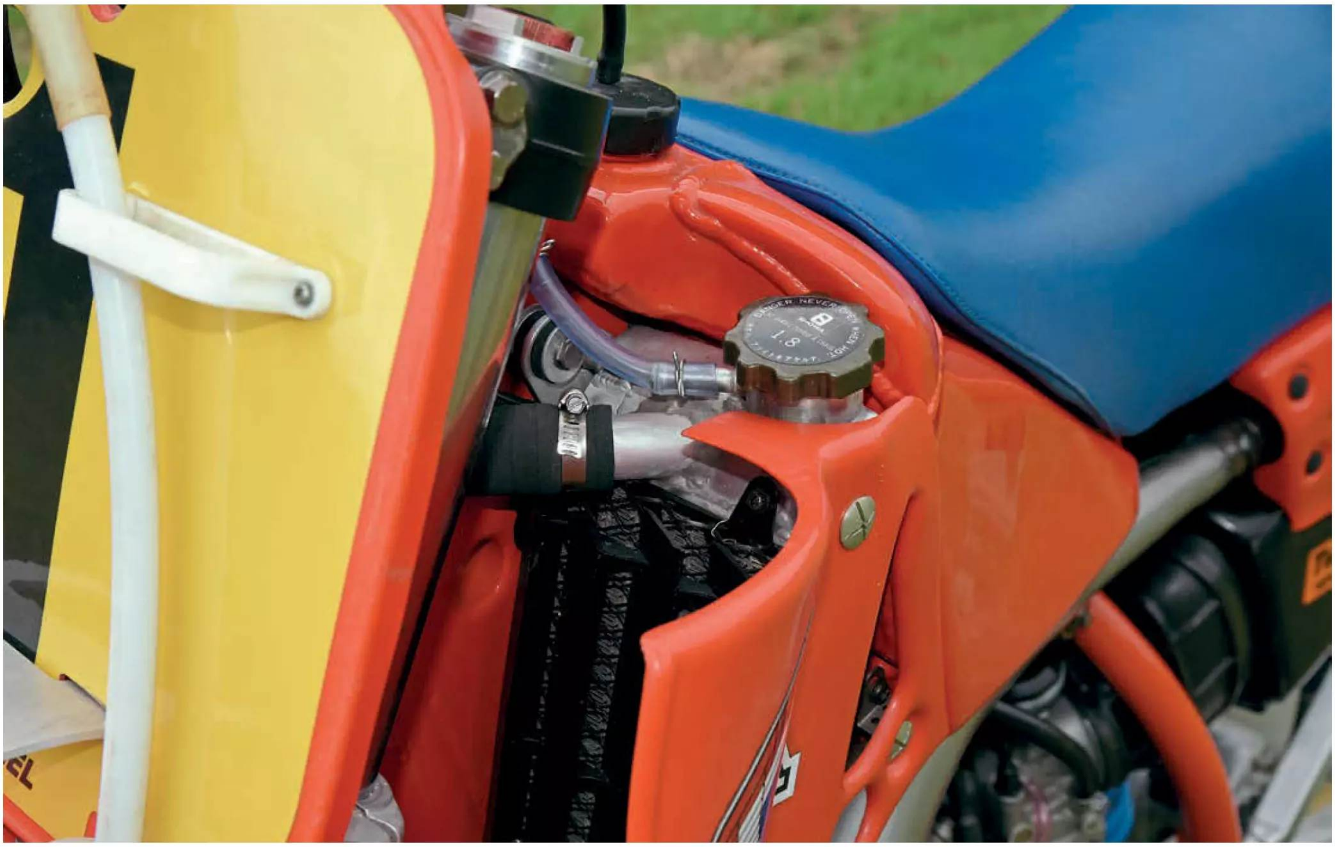
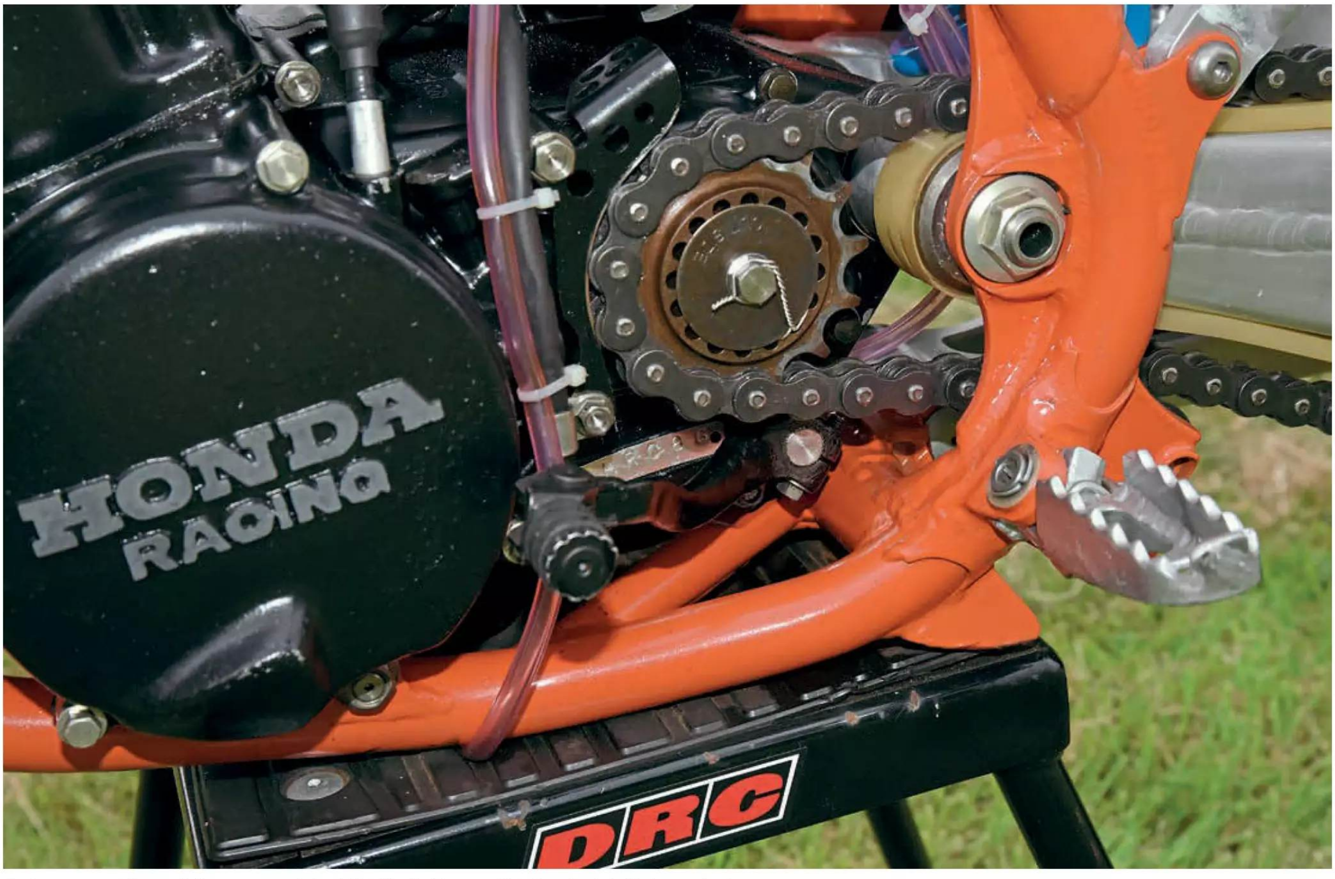
1
Twin Air

Mounting brackets are insulated from vibration by rubber washers.



An incident when Dave caught the radiator cap with his knee made Honda add a little extra aluminium to the tank.



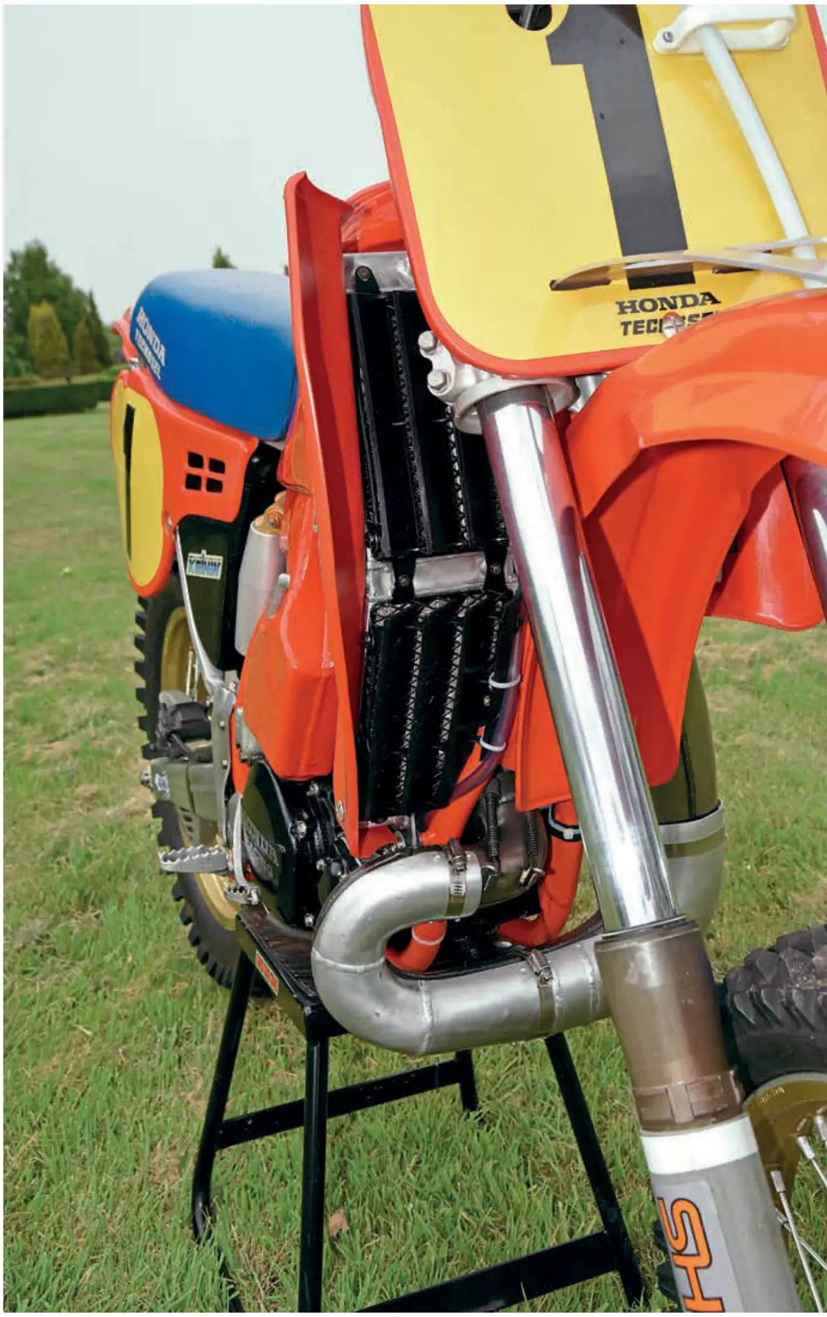
Fasteners pared to a minimum, sprockets drilled for lightness, attention to detail is important.

HRC – HONDA RACING CORPORATION

Honda have used many initials over their competition history but the ones which popped into mind for this feature are 'RSC' and 'HRC'. Imagine the size of the tank which had to have 'Race Service Centres' or 'Honda Racing Corporation' on it? Much easier to use the initials. Originally, Honda had handled all of their competition work within the main company but realised in the seventies perhaps something more dedicated was needed. To this end they launched the Race Service Centres which became Honda Racing Corporation in the eighties. Through these corporations they could produce small production runs to test ideas and not interfere with the main company's production timetable.

What Honda did was to make a special tank which had the combined benefits of lowering a litre or three down to nearer the centre of gravity and allowing the tank to be less high. Obviously, this meant the fuel pick-up point was lower than the carburettor, so a small vacuum pump was fitted in the system and lifted the fuel to a header tank which fed the carb. This tank came down the side of the engine and some really neat panel work made sure the kickstart tucked away. Also, it meant the exhaust system had to be routed a different way and it make its way around and up over the engine on the left side. This gave room for one radiator to be elongated and dropped down on the right-hand side, becoming both larger and slimmer at the same time and is an interesting exercise in radiator making.

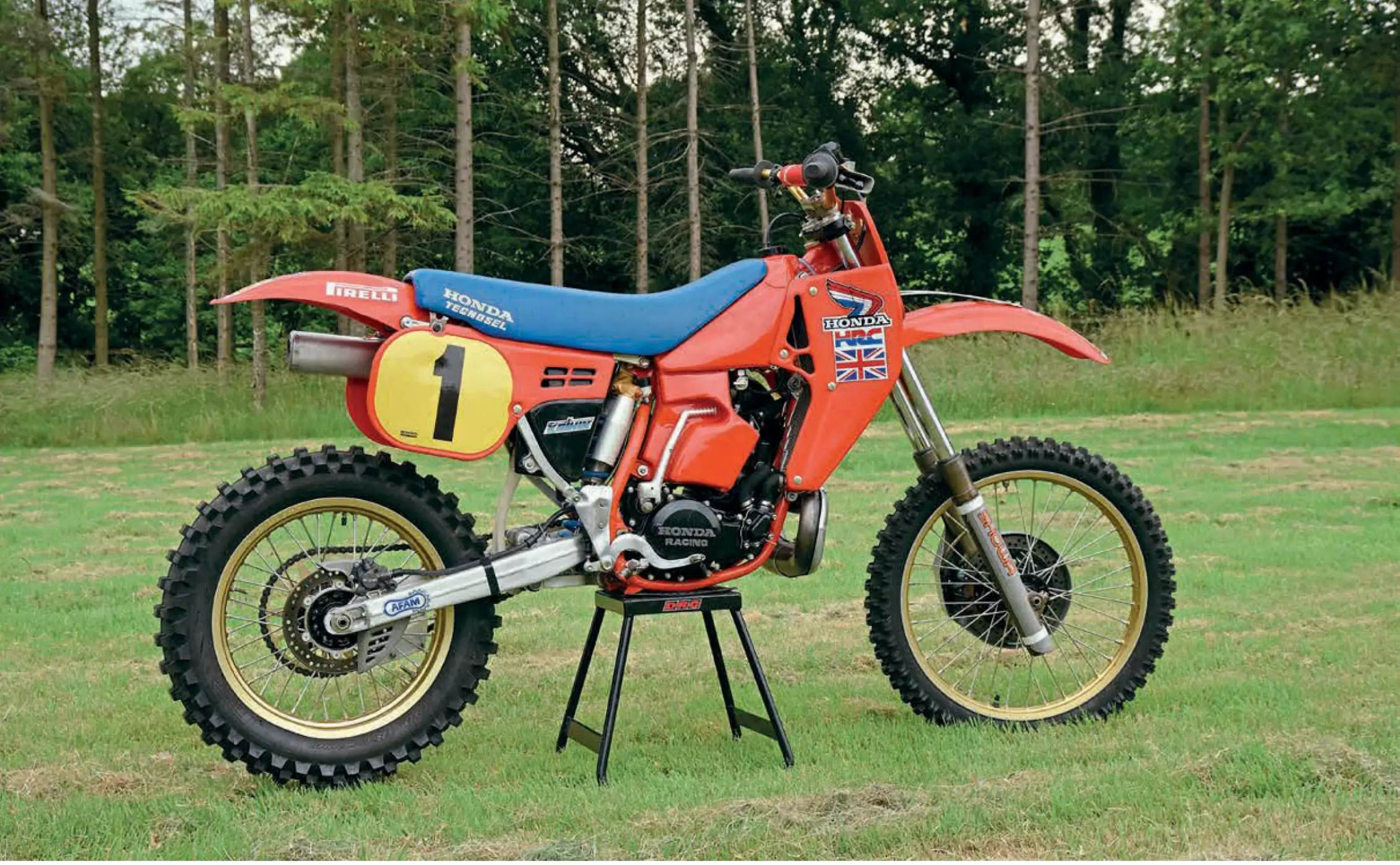
More special parts come with the suspension, made by Showa, but every single bit inside the forks and rear unit is finely fettled to give a desired result on the track.▶



Above: Moving the exhaust to the other side created space for a longer radiator.

Left: Possibly the only standard part is the front mudguard, though the stay is trick

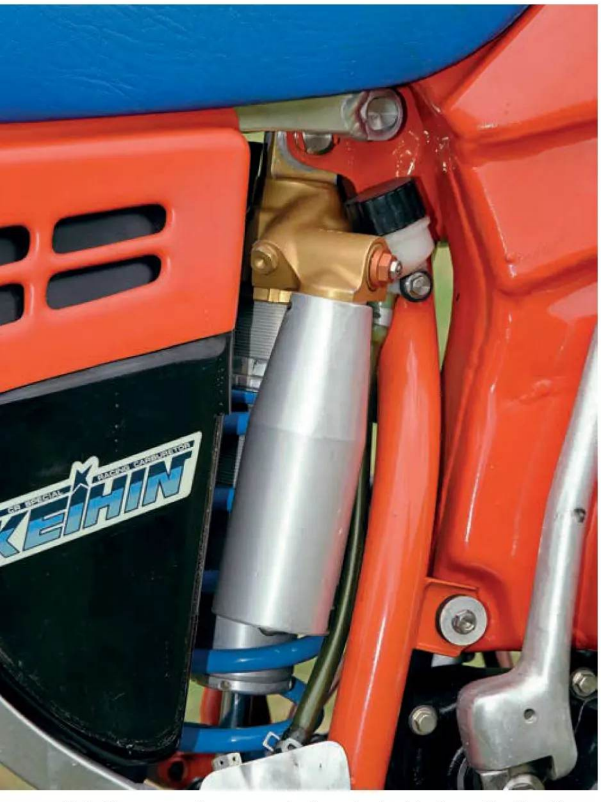
Right: So, in order to create the correct exhaust length, it has to be an interesting shape… The aluminium cover helps protect it from stone damage.



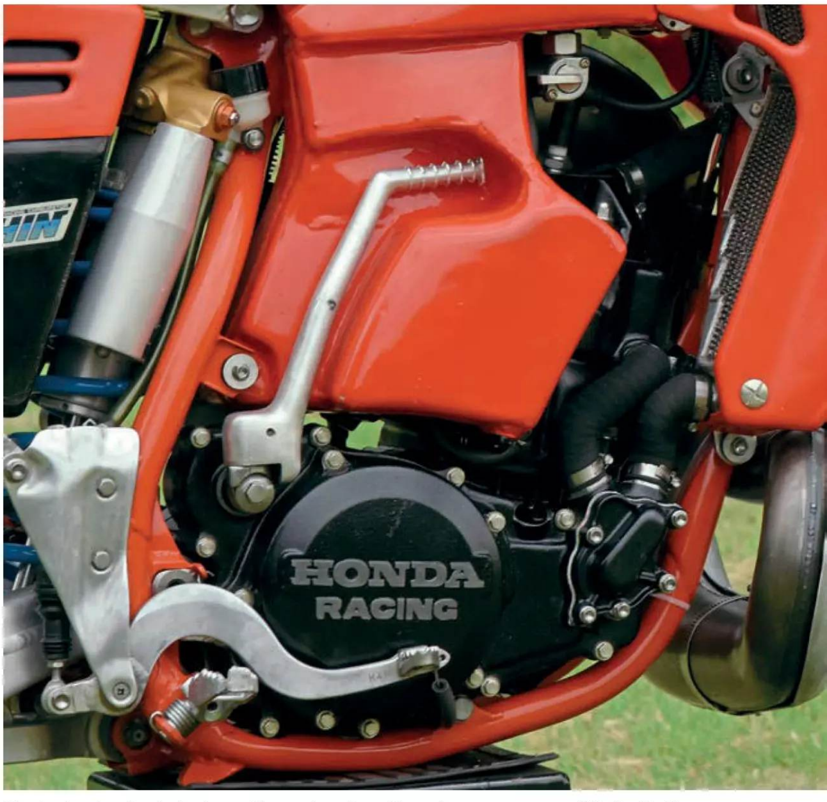
Above: In fairness it does resemble the production bike, but I think we'd feel cheated if a factory Honda wasn't super-trick.

The sliders are cast from magnesium and weigh next to nothing; stanchions are 43mm diameter and would have works blue fork gators which are missing in our pics. At the rear, the suspension unit has a piggy-back reservoir mounted on it rather than Jubilee clipped to the frame tube as the standard production model wore.

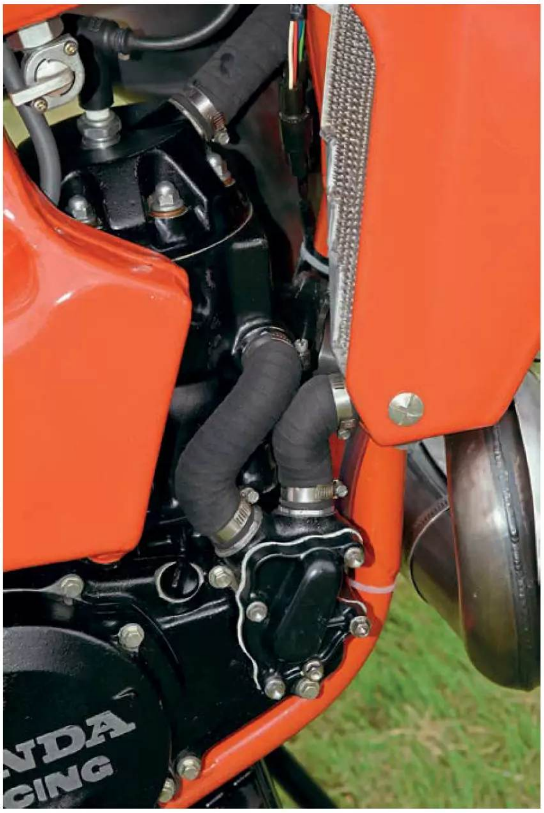
Taking pics for a feature is an ideal time to closely inspect the subject and a normal question is to ask what's special. However, in this case there was no need as all we had to do was photograph everything and in the end it was easier to ask what wasn't special. Initially, it was just the front mudguard and goes back to my



Note the suspension reservoir piggy-backed to the unit rather than clipped to the frame.



The tank extension helps lower the centre of gravity and a vacuum pump lifts fuel to the carburettor. Formed cover keeps the brake equipment safe.


Coolant is circulated by a pump in here.

comment of, 'It's not the cost but the cost of the right bit', because the front mudguard could have come from the spares department. However, even here there has been some modification gone on… Yes, the bracing stay. What this does is prevent the front of the guard from flapping about and be a distraction to the rider. Not a major thing, but in the world of GP MX any little advantage is worth having.

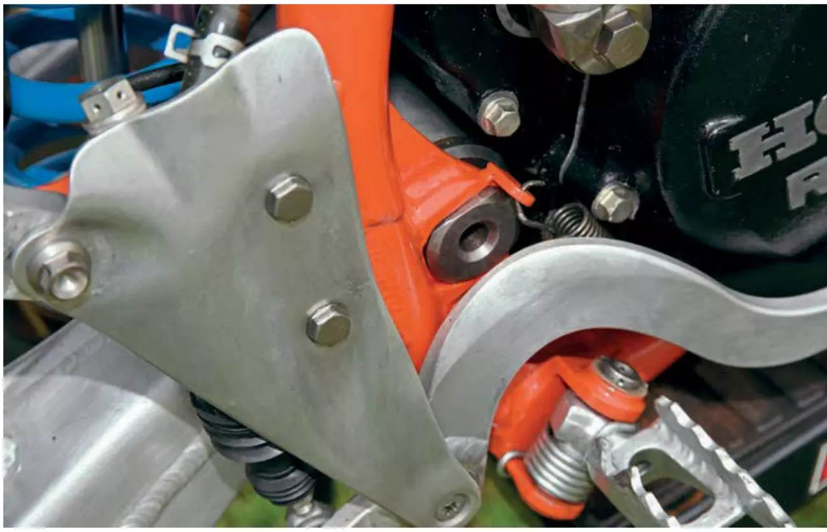
The bike abounds with tiny details. All fasteners are titanium and alloy, and obviously much lighter than steel; even the heads of these are hollowed out to save a little weight. Castings are magnesium, carburettor is special, as is the seat, which goes right up to the top of the tank, whereas the standard one finishes a little further down. Even behind the hand-formed plastics ▶

SOME HISTORY

Honda were noted for cutting up their factory machines once their race life was over. In part this was because they didn't want any chance of a previous year's bike beating the new one, and also factory bikes are effectively test beds for ideas and they didn't want these ideas to be seen by other makers. However, some bikes did escape the fate of others and what is known about this bike is it spent some time in the Hockenheim Museum in Germany before passing into private ownership. It wasn't the only factory bike to be displayed there either. Dave Thorpe himself was given one of the bikes he raced in 1986, though it was a shell rather than a complete bike; all of the internals – be they engine or suspension – were removed before he was given the bike. The recommissioning of this particular machine is documented elsewhere and makes for interesting reading.

Suspension linkages are works of art.

NISSIN
AFAM
First disc on the rear of a Honda MXer; caliper is lightweight magnesium.


A welded stop means there's only one spanner needed for the swinging arm spindle, plus there's space for the brake lever return spring.

there are extra details, such as the exhaust pipe slides through the sub-frame so can be tucked in extra close, and it goes on.

Now, I reckon I'm not alone in finding these details fascinating and discussing them out with the off-road world doesn't exactly make me a wow at parties, but within our scene such discussions tend to formulate around, 'Could we do it in our shed?' The answer would have be as close to 'no' as makes little difference but never say never. The biggest stumbling blocks would always be two things, the first being to find out what the bike was actually like – dimensions of components and so on. The second stumbling block would be finding the funds to pay for it.

In the UK, 1986 was pre-lottery and the hopes of the nation rested on either the football pools or premium bonds. It is doubtful either source of instant money would be enough to fund a bike such as this, and one of the reasons the 'production-based' rule came in was because costs were escalating beyond sensibility, which brought claims the factory teams were 'buying GP success' and freezing out lesser wealthy competition. Honda embraced this new production rule and built team bikes which met said rule and won another bunch of championships. **cdb**

Left Lots of suspension travel means lots of room for the rear tyre is needed.

Below: Lightweight silencer is repackable.

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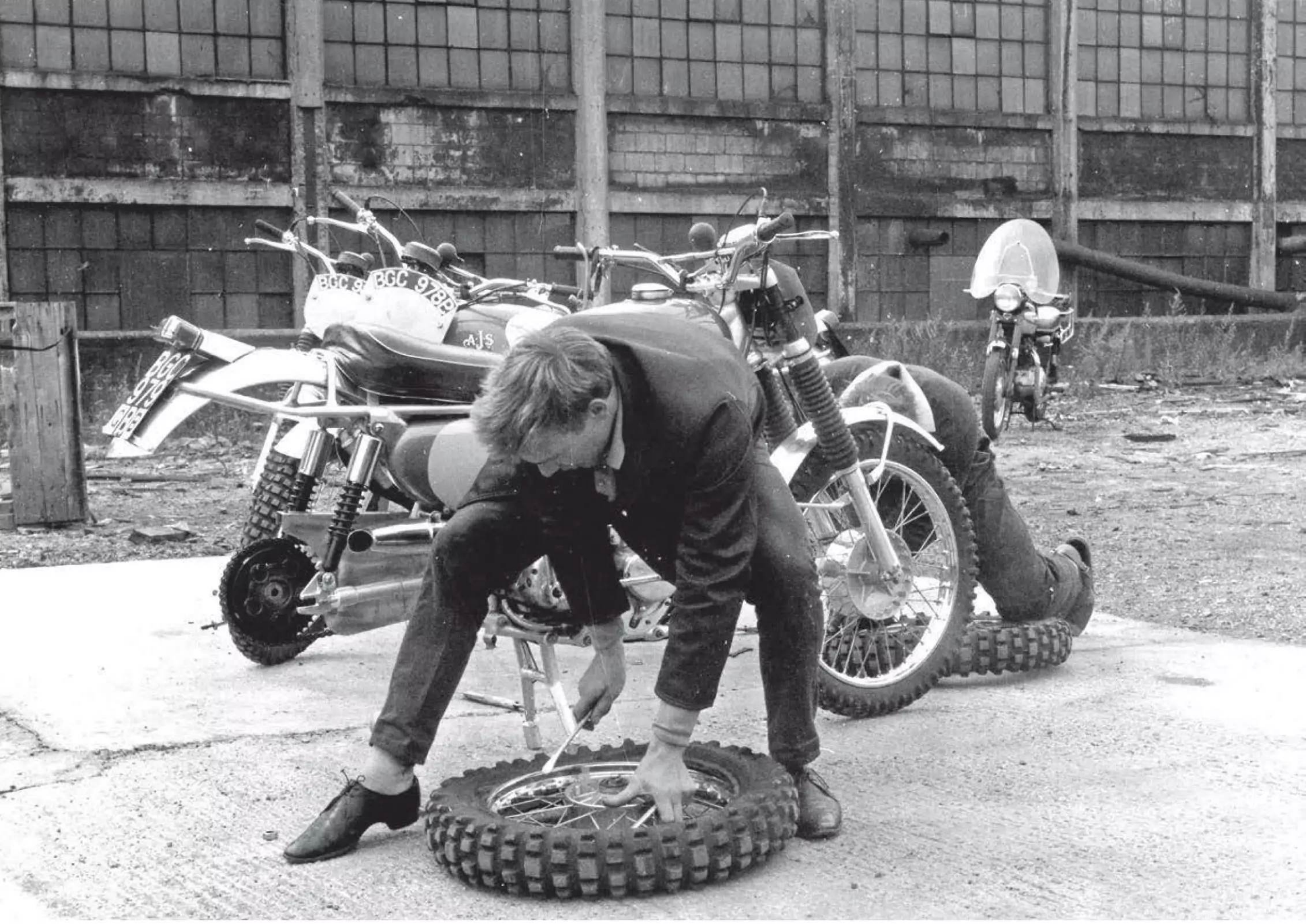


Flashback - Fine fettling in 1966

Familiarity with the model was an important part of ISDT teamwork.

Words and pics: Tim Britton Media Ltd

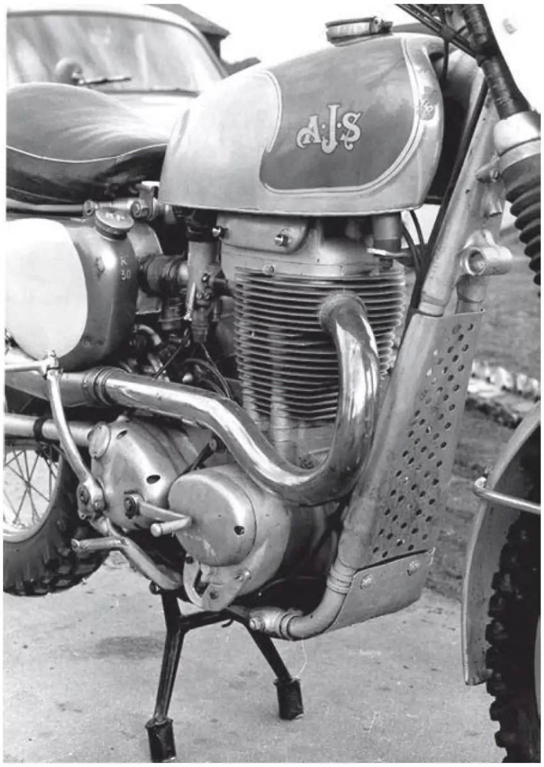
Prepping factory team motorcycles for an important event such as the International Six Days Trial in the sixties was an altogether more homely affair and rather than in a clinically clean environment where technicians wore white overalls and latex gloves, often it took place out the back of the factory.

MotorCycling popped along to Birmingham for their issue of 6 August, 1966, where the AMC teamsters were doing a bit of tyre changing practice outside the James works - James being part of the AMC empire. The visit was prompted by the announcement from AMC which stated that instead of a 350, 500 and 600 as team mounts, all three riders - Peter Gaunt, Mick Andrews and John Lewis - would be mounted on 500s for the Swedish event. This was no change for Mick Andrews as he was always destined for a 500, but Peter was supposed to be on a 350 while John was expected to ride the 600.

Coming a mere fortnight before the final briefing for riders and less than a month before the event itself,

Above: Mick Andrews front and centre with the tyre levers in action, John Lewis behind, almost hidden by Mick's bike.

Right: There's nothing like a bit of friendly banter from your teammates when you're elbow deep in a task.



Peter Gaunt checks his ignition.

the reasons given for this change were cryptic to say the least and what wasn't being said was at least as important as what was.

The sad fact is the majority of the British industry was on its knees by the end of the sixties and supporting major events was something it couldn't afford, at least not with several different capacity motorcycles. It was reported the decision had been made purely to simplify the spares situation as with all three bikes being of the same capacity, then should one hit trouble there were spares for the other two also on hand. If they'd sent three different capacity machines, a larger number of spares also would have to be supplied. This despite taking into account the frames, wheels, forks, gearboxes and primary drives being as near identical as possible and only the engine capacity being different. Even here, the difference would be limited to mostly above the crankcase mouth with a bigger or smaller barrel and piston, matching cylinder head and valves.

The machines were based on the G80CS motor, suitably tuned for flexibility rather than out-and-out performance,

Wheel removal is helped by not having to take the brake drum off, too… no idea what John Lewis is checking though.

Top left: Some neat touches for the ISDT, obviously the high-mounted exhaust and protector plates bolted on to vulnerable places but also extensions on the centre stand so wheels come out easily.

Left: "Are you sure this is right…?" seems to be John Lewis' comment.

WELL, HOW DID THEY DO?

It seems the decision to run all three machines the same size paid off as the three AMC machines were on target for three gold medals until a few short miles from the end when an incident stopped Mick Andrews dead in his tracks. In the cruellest of ISDT tradition, a stone was flung up and shattered the crankcase of his bike and it was only a matter of moments before the engine seized solid, ending the Derbyshire ace's ISDT almost within sight of the finish. The other two - Gaunt and Lewis - did finish on gold standard.

It wasn't to be the end for these machines though, as a couple would have an outing in the following year's Polish ISDT when the massive sporting dealer Comerfords had taken on the three machines from AMC.

All three bikes looking good.

It doesn't hurt to make extra certain things are right…

This is how we looked in the Sixties…

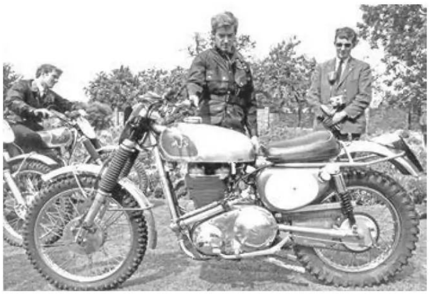
TYRED OR WHAT?

Changing tyres is a skill all ISDT riders needed, especially in the days of tubes, and any self-respecting competitor would need to accomplish a number of maintenance tasks during the event. This may be to repair damage or keep the bike in good order, but whatever the reason, the tasks had to be done fast and in the case of tyres it was wheel out, tyre off, tyre on, wheel in, and on the way again. So important was this task, it was incorporated into training days. Messrs. Gaunt, Andrews and Lewis were timed during their sessions, with Peter Gaunt coming out top at 4min 47sec, Mick Andrews next with a time of 4min 55sec, while John Lewis took a leisurely 5min… still, 13 seconds between fastest and slowest wasn't bad.

This time it is John Lewis front and centre with Peter Gaunt behind.

Right: Gentlemen of the press, we give you Peter Gaunt's 1966 ISDT mount.

Below: "Right lads, just inspect the rear end of the bike while we sort out the exposure and shutter speed…"



and slotted into a frame made up from various models in AMC's range. There was a slightly modified cylinder head with the spark plug at an angle so a faster change could happen, and this left room for an emergency centre plug which, coupled with a dual ignition, meant a double safeguard for the bikes. The ignition itself included a capacitor rather than battery which was much more able to stand up to six days of an enduro and lighter, too.

The bikes themselves had been built by Wally Wyatt, John McLaren and Bert Lambert at the Plumstead factory where they would be returning, to be checked over after the tyre-changing session. Also, there were a few modifications to complete before the machines were deemed ready for International action and noted on the day there were some detail changes to the bikes which now had copper oil lines rather than flexible rubber ones which had been found to have kinked and caused machine seizures in earlier testing. Once finished, the machines would be heading up to Fenny Drayton in the Midlands where a press session was to be held and the riders paraded to the media. cdb

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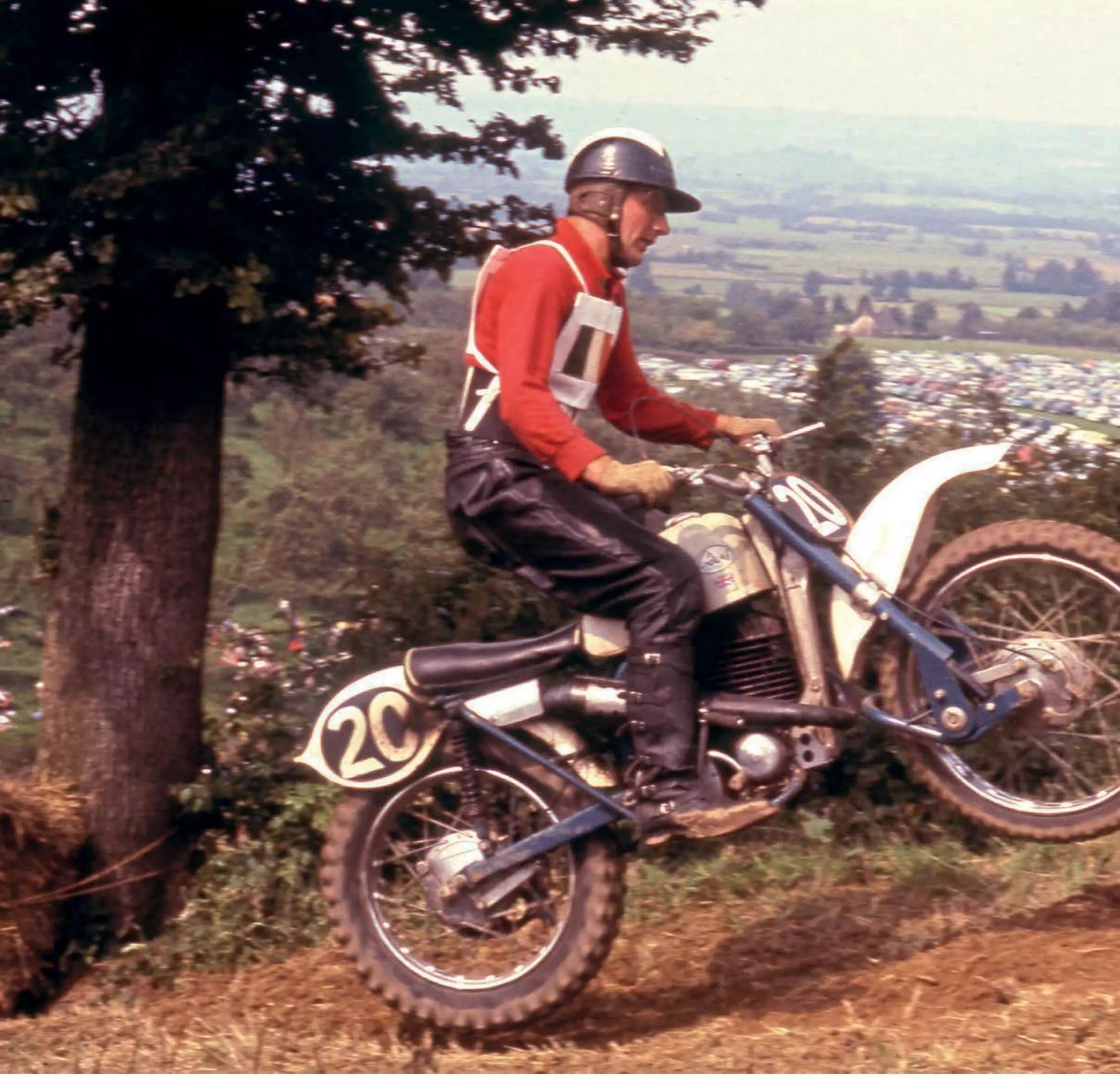


One sunny day

There have been several locations where Britain has held MX GPs. A casual glance in the Nick Nicholls MX file brought out two from the sixties.

Words Tim Britton Media Ltd **Pics** Mortons Archive

Above: John Barkley hasn't time to admire the crowds in the car park as he's pressing on in his race,

There's no doubt about it, the UK was riding high in the MX world in the mid-sixties. Jeff Smith was reigning world champion in 1965, was about to win his second title, and would head into 1966 as world champion, too. Even better from the enthusiast's point of view, also there was a chance he could take another 500cc title.

This little musing was prompted by coming across the reports of the British 250cc GP at Glastonbury in 1965 and the 1966 500cc British GP shocker at Farleigh Castle. Both events were outstanding in different ways and show the way fate's fickle hand plays out.

While it is true to say the aim of every world-class rider is to win a world championship, coming a close second to this aim is the one to win the home GP. Naturally, it is also the aim of every other competitor to beat the opposition on their home turf, something which leads to interesting and ferocious racing.

Top right: It was certainly a good event for Dave Bickers who rode away with eight points.

Above: Swede Aka Jonsson gets his Husqvarna airborne in the 250 British GP.

Such was the case when the 250cc GP contest arrived at Glastonbury in July 1965. Top favourite in the home stakes was definitely Dave Bickers despite three no scores in the previous three rounds – all Eastern Bloc countries. The 36,000-strong crowd expected the Coddenham Flyer to do well in the south west. Bickers didn't disappoint either, and while the series leader and eventual 250cc World Champion Victor Arbekov was a no-show due to injury, there were still riders such as Joel Robert, Torsten Hallman, Ake Jonsson and Don Rickman for the Greeves team man to contend with.

As the flag dropped, it seemed the day would head to Hallman and Czech Vlastimil Valek as Bickers was well down the list in 7th place. There were battles for 3rd and 4th spots, too, as Don Rickman and Bryan Goss duked it out on the 1½-mile circuit which, despite the dry weather, remained dust-free. Don Rickman worked his way past Goss and Hallman, which took the eye off Bickers who was steadily plugging away, working his way up the scale until he and Rickman were catching up with Valek. Hallman succumbed to gearbox trouble and dropped further and further back in the reckoning.

An expected challenge from Joel Robert didn't happen either as the Belgian's normally reliable CZ snapped a chain and four laps went by before he was out again, sadly too big a margin to overcome despite his 'never say die' style, and eventually he finished 19th. Also with chain woes was Alan Clough, and as his was within a lap or two of the finish he was left with little option but retire. At the chequered flag though, it was Bickers and Rickman in first and second spot, and the crowd waited for Heat Two.

Robert seemed to have got the drop of his mechanical woes and, like the reigning champion he was, when the flag dropped he was one of two at the head of the pack into the first corner, the other being Dave Bickers. With Bickers in the lead until lap three when Robert came past him, the Greeves man's maturity showed… as winner of the first heat and with Robert nowhere, all the British rider had to do was maintain second place and he would win the round… Sounds easy.

Left : A mixed meeting for Belgian Joel Robert; mechanical problems in heat one balanced against phenomenal success in heat two.

Right: Norwegian Willie Johanneson, CZ, keeps ahead of Dutch racer Jan van den Hoek's Greeves.

Middle: Dane Jan Moller keeps his CZ ahead of Spain's Oriol Bulto mounted on a Bultaco.

Bottom: Vastimil Valek, Jawa, would finish third on the day.

Robert seemed out to prove something to himself as he headed off into the distance, giving the crowd good value for money with a lurid riding style. Bickers, however, kept his focus firmly on keeping his second place ahead of the field. Behind him the battle really was for third place, a position which was soon in the hands of Don Rickman on his Bultaco Metisse as the Hampshire rider/manufacturer had passed Jonsson, Valek and fellow Brit, Goss. Though a ferociously competitive rider, Rickman was only an occasional international competitor – he was only out in one other 250 GP in 1965 - and possibly felt justified in hanging on to his third place. Further back, Jonsson and Valek had their own private tussle with positions swapped several times. However, the front three were never really

in danger as Robert continued his charge, eventually lapping everyone up to 7th place. Bickers let him go, content to know he would win and didn't want to risk sliding off.

In the end it was Bickers, Rickman and Valek who took the honours at Glastonbury, much to the delight of the home crowd at this Sun newspaper sponsored meeting. Additionally, this win gave Bickers eight points, boosting him to third place in the world championship. He would maintain this position for the remaining rounds to finish third behind Robert, who would lose his world 250cc title to Victor Arbekov. Sadly, Bickers wasn't destined to win the world title, though he had been twice European 250 champion… Little difference in

Above: Willie Johannesen from Norway looking relaxed on his CZ.

Middle: Don Rickman aboard the Bultaco Metisse he and his brother Derek were developing for the Spanish factory.

Left: Valek looking superbly confident and ahead of his nearest challenger who looks to be Austrian Carl Leitgeb on a Bultaco Metisse.

Right: Czech rider Antonin Hrach favours the CZ from his home country.

the location of the events but the title name changed in 1962.

Though the 250 GP was the main reason for the meeting, there were other races happening, too, as two heats would make for a very short scramble. The invitation races were split into two categories, with a 250cc and an over 320cc which may seem an odd designation but was designed to restrict the entry of over-bored 250s.

In the 250 class it was a Greeves one-two with Roger Snoad and Pat Lamper taking the first race, but it was even better for the Essex marque in race two as Snoad again won, but with Bill Gwynne second and Mike Jackson third, all on Greeves.

In the bigger class which was divided into the 320cc capacity and then unlimited, Brian Curtis, CJ Spooner and John Giles took the first race honours while in the unlimited race, again it was Curtis with Snoad second and C. White third.

A year later…

… and in the bigger class with Jeff Smith being the reigning world champion, he was expected to do well in 1966. Even better, the BSA factory seemed to have championship fever, and all sorts of things were being sanctioned and tried, which would have been good if these ideas were all from the ones doing the winning. Still, in the pre-season championship preview in the press of April 1966, BSA-mounted Smith was in the top five with the others being two more Brits in the form of Dave Bickers on a CZ rather than Greeves, and similarly mounted Chris Horsfield, with Swede Rolf Tibblin and Russian Igor Grigoriev both on CZs completing the

Above: Malcolm Davis riding in what could arguably be an event on home turf as he hails from the south west.

Left: Freddie Mayes was always a well-turned-out and stylish rider who was very fast without looking it.

Right: Vlastimil Valek is really pressing on, although the crowd seem to be focussed elsewhere.

Left: Bill Nilsson was the inaugural world champion when the series went up from European status in 1957. In those days he was AJS mounted, but for 1966 he was on a Husqvarna, though a damaged brake which kept locking on proved interesting during the racing.

Right: Arthur Lampkin was one of BSA's top riders, quite capable of winning in trials, scrambles and enduros… Here he was teammate with Jeff Smith.

Middle right: Don Rickman won his first GP when he dominated the 1966 British 500 meeting at Farleigh Castle. Though an infrequent international racer thanks to business pressures, he proved more than capable of taking on the best in the world.

five. The CZ models were 360cc, so giving away 134cc to Smith's latest factory BSA. However, they were also lighter, and the season would be shaped partly by BSA's battle against machine weight and reliability over the CZ's more developed machine.

The riders themselves were deemed to be in peak condition, Smith being the oldest, with Grigoriev being the most unknown quantity. What was certain, was that each rider was determined to be world champion and the odds were that any of the five could be achieve it… there was just the matter of 14 rounds to do first.

Our focus for this feature is the 1966 British GP at Farleigh Castle, the first 500cc GP to be held on the now-legendary circuit and the 10th round in the series, which Jeff Smith arrived at with a slim, but possible, chance of retaining his world title.

In order to win his third world championship, Smith would have had to win not only round 10, but the remaining four, too, and given Smith's ability and determination it wasn't out of the question. Ahead of him were two GP heats of 30 minutes plus two laps. Watching him was a crowd of 40,000 at the Sun newspaper sponsored British GP.

Before the GP got underway, the organising West Wilts club read out a telegram from Smith's rival, East German police officer Paul Friedrichs, withdrawing from the event having been being stricken with a sickness and therefore unable to travel. Any thoughts that Friedrichs' absence would give the other riders an easier time or make for less entertaining racing were soon forgotten as the flag dropped for the first heat. It was to be Britain's day, with the first five riders from the home country.

Straight into the lead from the get-go was Don Rickman and, try as he might, Smith could not get close enough to the rider/manufacturer, though initially it was Czech rider Vlastimil Valek on his rear wheel with Alan Lampkin in third place, followed by Smith. As the race went on, Rickman managed a 14-second lead,

Below: By the mid-sixties Andy Lee had moved on from his well-known 'Fenman' Triumph and had joined the Metisse movement; Matchless power for him though.

Right: Jeff Smith arrived at Farleigh with a slim chance of still winning the world championship for the third time in a row; all he had to do was win the last five GPs… Sadly it was Rickman's day.

Left: Quite a crowd to watch British riders such as Chris Horsfield dominate the GP.

Below: Chris Horsfield was reckoned to be a 'man who could' at the start of the season and he put up excellent performances through the series. He would leave Farleigh with a third place.

but Smith was carving his way through the field and was soon sat on the Hampshire man's tail. An expected challenge from Jerry Scott failed for the simplest of reasons: his clutch wouldn't free at the start and by the time he was ready to go the pack had gone and he was too late to join the fray.

Sten Lundin, too, had mechanical misfortune with his Lito. Taken out for the first time in months, the front wheel had virtually collapsed by the end of the first leg. Also having mechanical problems was Smith's teammate Arthur Lampkin, who had the misfortune to suffer split fuel hoses on his Victor, meaning he had to push back to the paddock. There was some controversy as the '30-minute' board wasn't shown, and some riders were caught on the hop as the chequered flag came down on the Rickman/Smith one-two, with Rickman being timed at 16.8 seconds ahead of the reigning world champion.

With time to fettle machines, the second leg promised to be even more thrilling than the first. With his clutch fixed, Jerry Scott left the line in first place, and by lap two he'd been overhauled by Rickman as his BSA stalled going down Farleigh's notorious steps and it took the rider so long to fire up the high compression engine, the rest of the field flashed past him, too. At the head of the field was Rickman, Smith and Vic Eastwood, with Smith sitting on Rickman's rear wheel. Smith spotted a gap and slotted his BSA through it to take the lead and set about opening up a bigger lead. However, no matter how he tried he couldn't shake Don Rickman and his Triumph Metisse as he stuck to Smith's BSA. Fate played a hand, and the leading pair came upon the rear guard which caused Rickman to be baulked, giving Smith a chance to pull a 10-second lead. It was to no avail as Rickman cleared the obstruction and was back on the reigning champion's tail.

Rickman carved second after second off the leader and looked just about to try for the lead but was baulked

Dave Bickers moved on from Greeves at the start of 1966, joining the CZ fraternity.

Jan Johansson out on a 360 Lindstrom for the British GP.

Arthur Lampkin leads Rolf Tibblin, though fuel pipe troubles halted Lampkin later on.

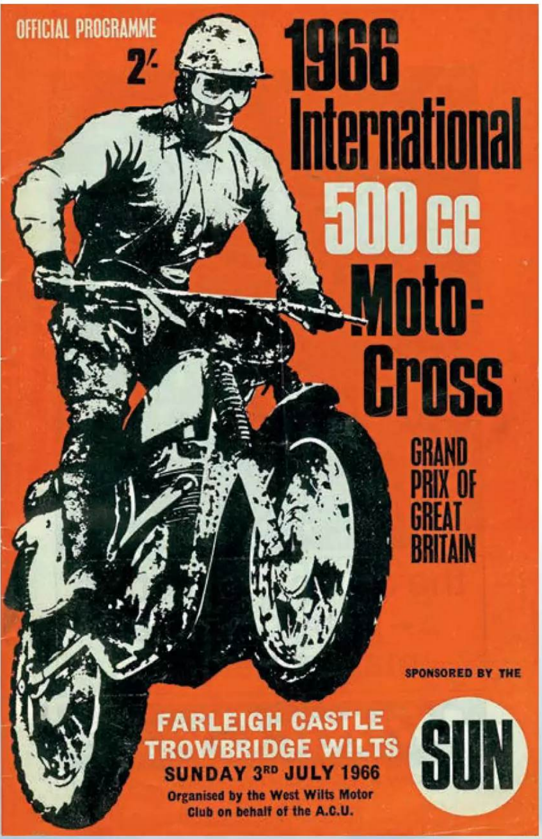
No problem with seeing the action for spectators as fencing was more rudimentary in the sixties so spectators could see exactly how Chris Horsfield was doing.

By using a unit 500cc Triumph engine in his Metisse, Don Rickman gained a smaller, lighter machine and also harked back to the Metisse roots when the brothers slotted an alloy T100 engine into their Gold Star chassis to create the first Metisse.

again and it was not to be. The time gap though, was considerably less than Smith had managed in the first heat, which put Rickman and Smith tying with a win and a second each. In the first heat, Smith was 16.8 seconds behind Rickman. In the second, Rickman was 4.4 seconds behind Smith, and Don Rickman was pronounced winner of the 1966 500cc British MX GP. It was the rider/ ▶

BLAME OR NO?

It would be quite easy for Smith and his boss, BSA Comp Shop Manager Brian Martin, to blame the problems of having to deal with a material like titanium which wasn't fully understood and certainly didn't make for very easy repairs in the scrambles paddock. Neither rider nor manager did, or at least not in public, and the harshest criticism of the titanium experiment was a cryptic comment by Martin who suggested perhaps they shouldn't have gone GP racing with such a new material.



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SUNDAY 3RD JULY 1966
Organised by the West Wilts Motor Club on behalf of the A.C.U.

Left : The event programme, a 'must-have' for spectators. There are reckoned to be 30,000 of them and allowing some will be families and only needing one programme, so, let's say 10,000 x 2/- (two shillings if you're younger than the editor), so, 20,000/- divided by 20 gives £1000! Quite a bit in 1966.

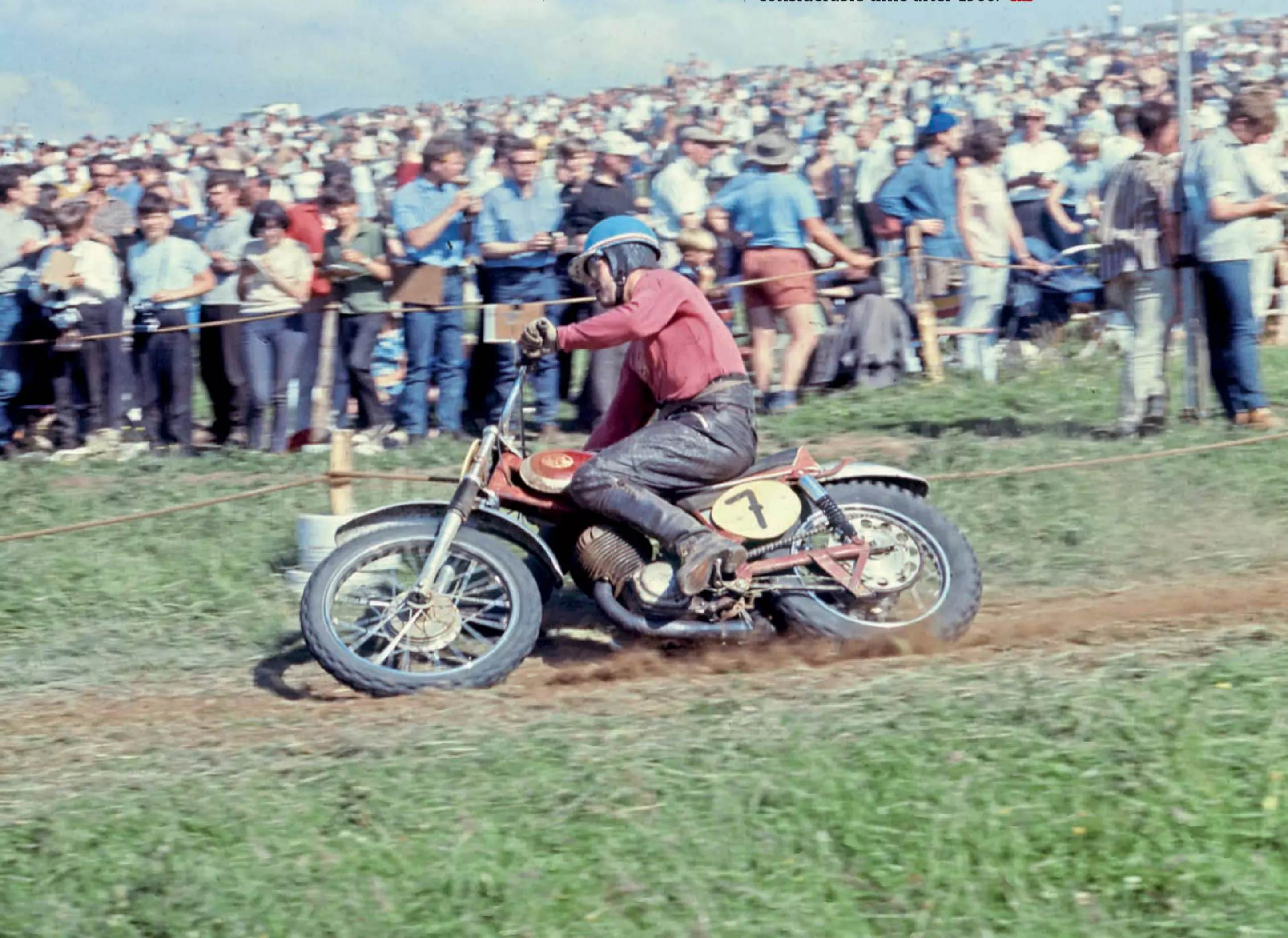
Bottom: Vlastimil Valek earned enough championship points with his 400cc Jawa to leave Farleigh fourth in the world.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

Each GP was based on two heats, and the winner was decided on aggregate, with it being possible to win a GP without winning a heat. Each rider in a heat will earn points on their finishing position, with the two scores added together. Obvious enough, except that heat points are in lowest to highest with the winner gaining one point, second place two points, and so on. So, the lowest score proclaims the winner and this transfers to GP points, with the winner earning eight, second place earns six points, third is four points, then three, two and one point for sixth. There's more… A rider's best seven results out of 14 GPs count. Should there be a tie then the decider is the total number of wins. If the tie continues then it's the total number of seconds and so on. It's only complicated if you want it to be.

manufacturer's first GP win, and it also meant there was no chance for Smith to retain his world championship.

Indeed, the announcement was made at the end of the day to the effect that Paul Friedrichs was the 1966 World Champion. The East German had six wins in hand, and would take another to make seven, while Rolf Tibblin was the only other competitor to win more than one GP, winning the Danish and Dutch rounds, with Jan Johansson, Jeff Smith, Don Rickman, Arthur Lampkin and Victor Arbekov having a win each. As Friedrichs won on a two-stroke, his success heralded a new dawn in racing… the era of the two-stroke, and would take burgeoning environmental concerns to end some considerable time after 1966. cdb



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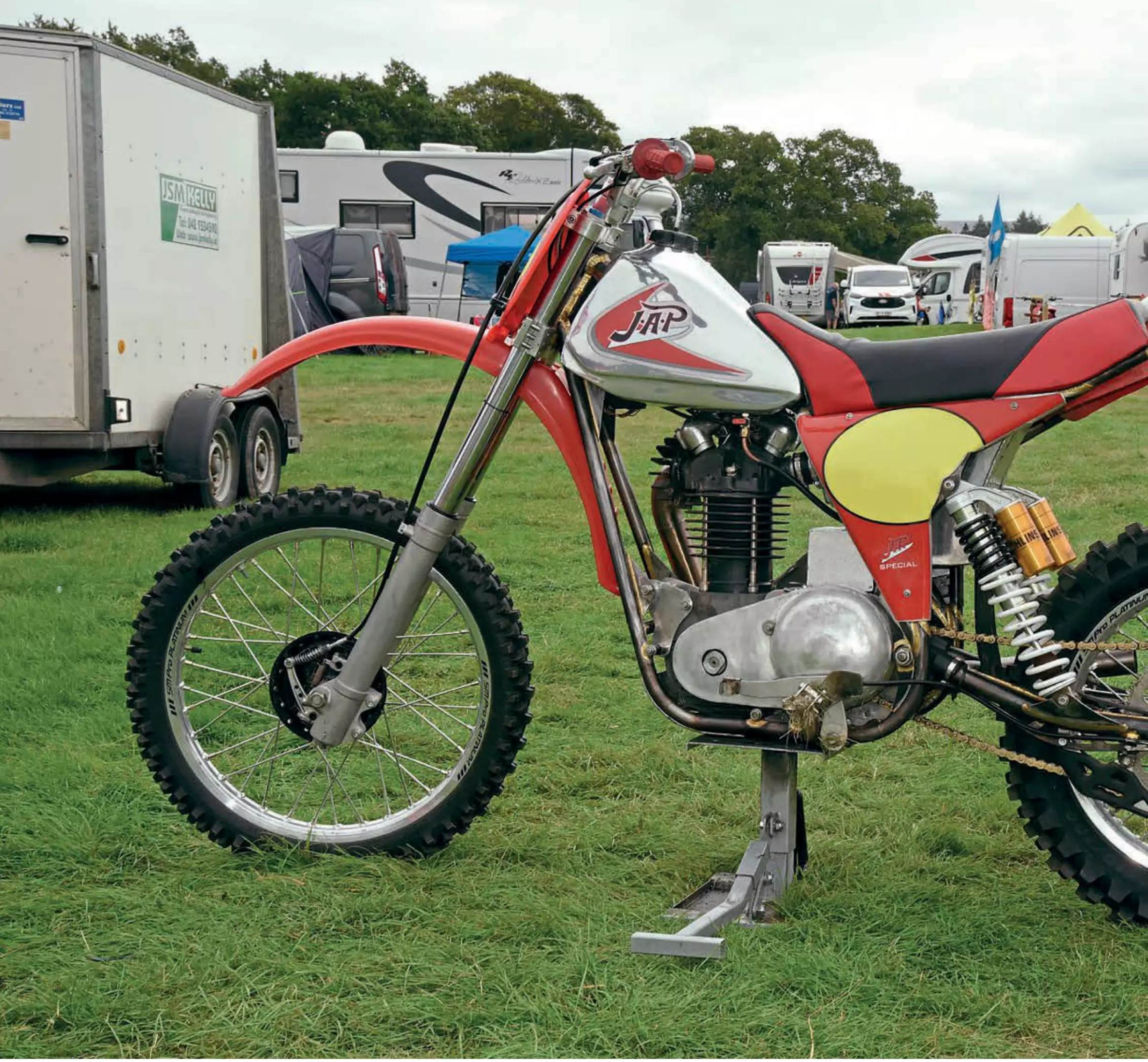


Above: Oh, he's bunged a JAP engine in a Maico… Er no, though there is some Maico influence to the machine.

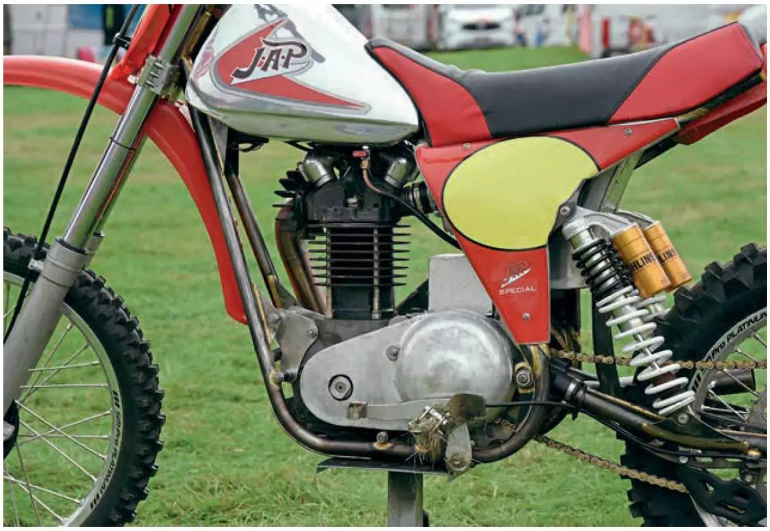
Special edition

Team JAP is a familiar sight at motocross meetings in the UK. CDB caught up with them at Drumlanrig and had a look at the latest version of the vintage single.

Words and pics Tim Britton Media Ltd

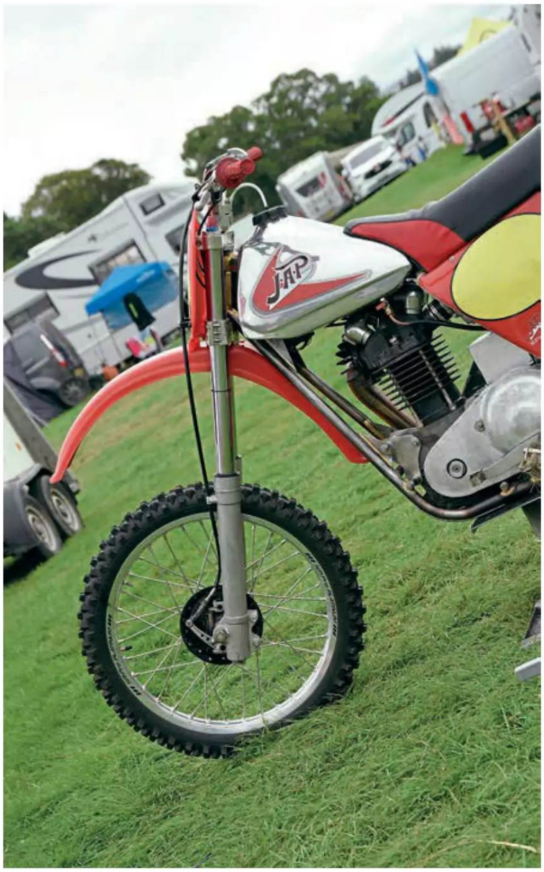
Take an engine, the initial design of which was cobbled together 95 years ago, slightly refined 90 years ago then had a reworking nearly 60 years ago, fit it into a frame design created 60 years ago and go racing… Doesn't sound like a recipe for success, does it? Thing is, no one told Cecil Pearson's Team JAP this and the superb mix of vintage and classic components are a sight and sound to behold at classic scrambles around the UK where they're usually at the front of the pack. It doesn't hurt that the bikes have determined riders on them, but still…

Constructing a bike from a selection of parts is no new concept and parts are chosen for a variety of reasons, from 'Used what I had' to 'These are the best bits', and often include 'Wanted something different', so there're lots of reasons for creating something a step away from the norm. London's JA Prestwich produced a lot of engines for a variety of applications,



Above: JAP's 4B engine is quite a tall unit.

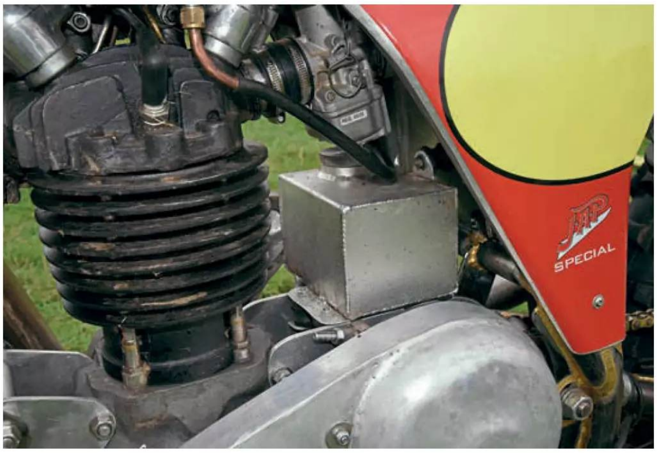
Right: Forks are 45mm stanchion Marzocchis and still in the tuning stage; stronger springs are being acquired.

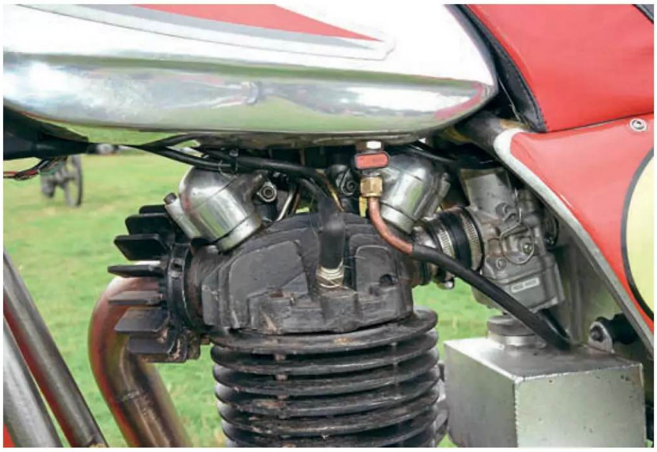


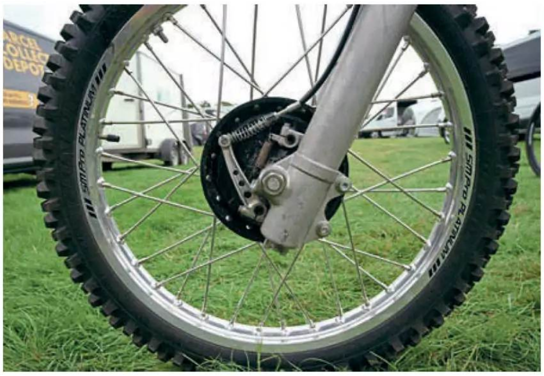
with motorcycling being one, and their 500cc pushrod single Type 4 became the mainstay of speedway, grass track, sand racing and long track for more than 40 years. Its final classic, long stroke, form came in 1967 when it was designated the '4B' and included the latest Amal carburettor and improved breathing to produce more power. Though there was a short stroke version developed from this unit, it is the 4B long stroke engine which is most familiar to racers and forms the basis of all the bikes in Cecil's team.

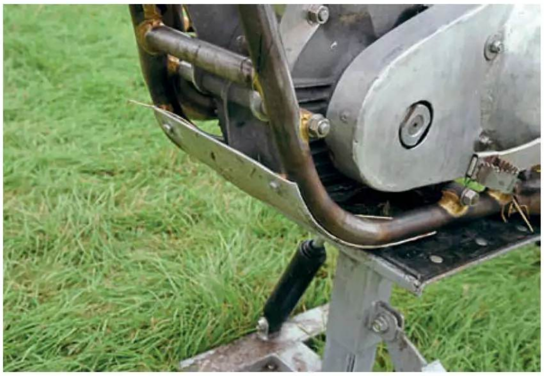
While there are similarities between all of the bikes, this doesn't mean they're all the same and spotting this latest version of JAP-ness on his pitch at Drumlanrig showed it was something special. One of the problems with using a JAP engine is the physical height of the unit. It's 22 inches tall, which can give ground clearance issues, and Cecil was finding the JAPs were too low so looked at creating something with more up-to date-dimensions. "I first thought about a Maico frame and slotting the engine in was okay, but it had to go too far up under the tank and JAP engines are not well cooled as it is," he tells me.

The normal working environment for the 4B unit was four fast laps of a 400-yard oval, so overheating wasn't really an issue as the race was over quickly. A scramble, on the other hand, is on a longer track and goes on for longer, too. Running on methanol helps cool the engine as it needs more heat to go from liquid to gas than petrol does. But still the engine was too high in the frame and Cecil reasoned that by the time he'd chopped the frame about he might as well have a frame made using Maico dimensions but more suited to the JAP engine. Luckily. one of Team JAP riders is Harry Stitt who, as well as being phenomenally fast on the track, is also a talented frame builder and has made several of the frames for Team JAP. ▶









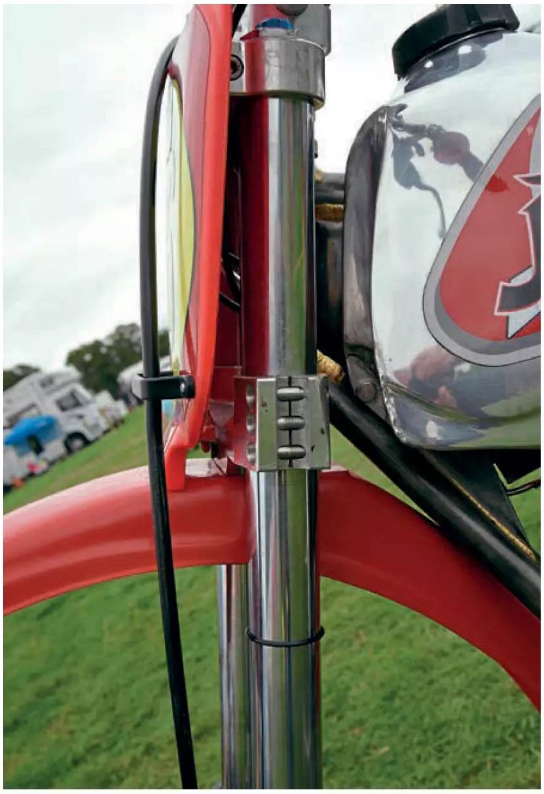
Above left : This neat box contains Castrol R and there's enough to keep the bike lubed throughout a scramble.

Above right: The alloy valve covers were a refinement in the thirties and kept muck out of a vulnerable area of the cylinder head.

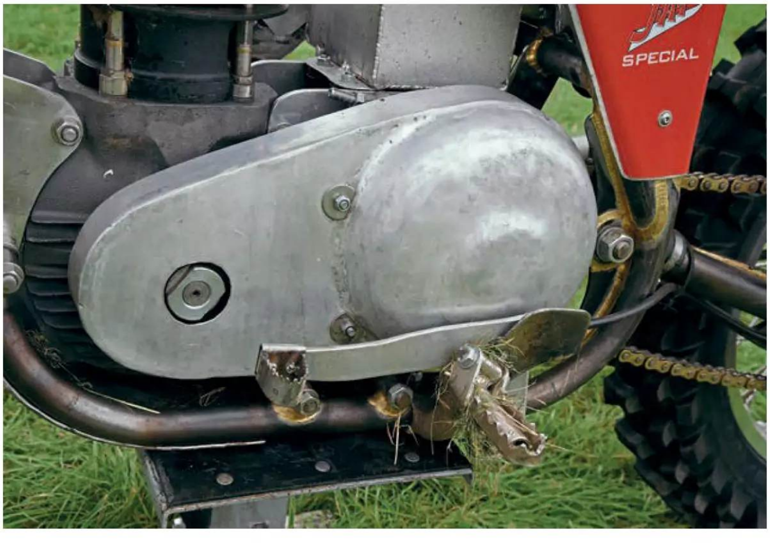
Below left: It's a Honda brake. Well, Honda wheel actually, too.

Left: An alloy sump guard stops track debris from damaging the underside of the engine.

Bottom: Can you spot what the clutch dome was originally? No? A frying pan… The owner also cooked up the brake pedal.

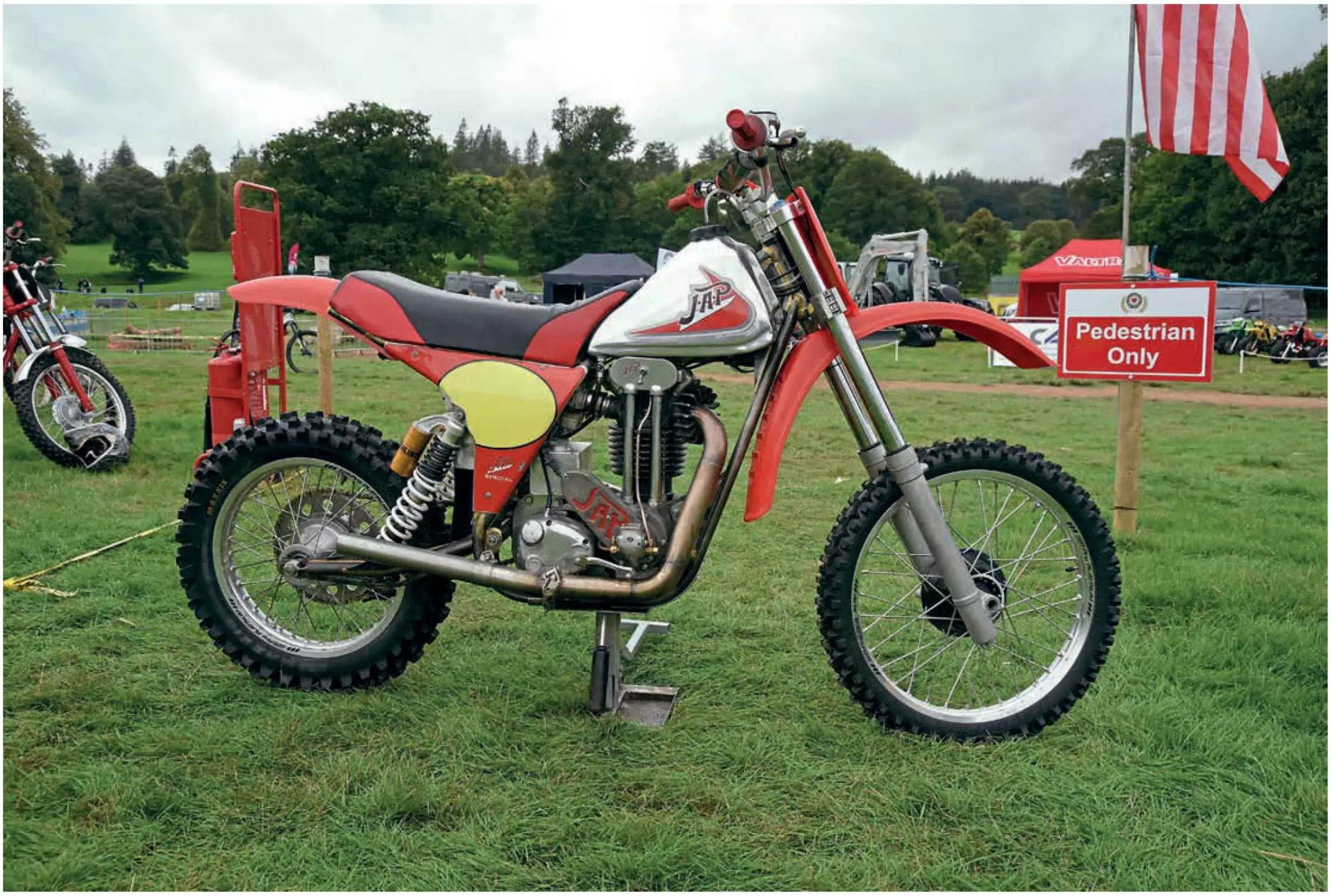


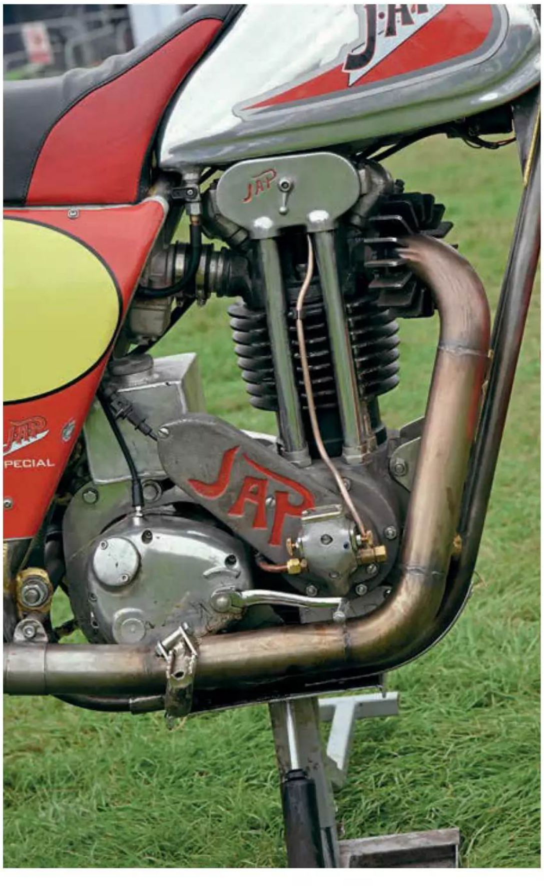
Large fork yokes with lots of bolts keep the steering true.



Looking at the more modern ideas, one thing Cecil was keen to include in the design was having the swinging arm pivot as close to the line of the main shaft as possible. "Modern engines such as the Maico can have the swinging arm right up close to the back of the gearbox, but the AMC box we use has too big a shell to get it as close as we'd like, but we do our best," he says. Having the pivot point as close to the main shaft as possible means the chain can be shorter and run with much less slack which stops it flapping around.

For this particular project, Ohlin rear dampers have been chosen and are balanced against Marzocchi front forks. Suspension is improving all the time but it's not quite there yet as the JAP Special is a lot heavier than the bike they were originally on. This means the suspension is bottoming out a lot when landing from jumps and making handling odd. "It's not too bad on flatter circuits and we had it out in the Friday night





Above : Though a mix of vintage and twinshock parts, the mix is quite pleasant to view.

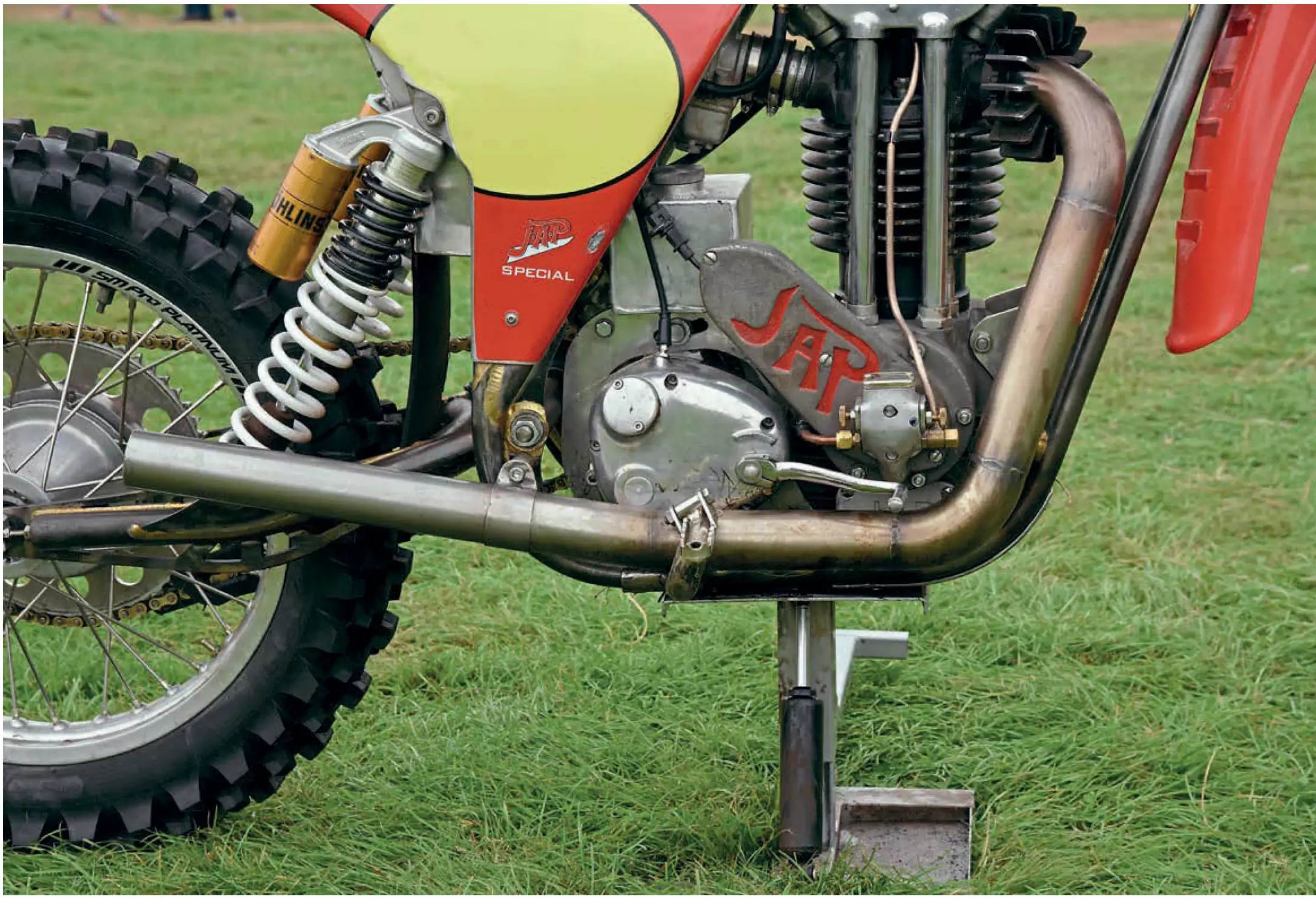
Left: A basic design from 1930 yet still winning in 1970 and successful in classic MX today.

Right: It is a JAP and pretty special.

grasstrack which starts the racing at Drumlanrig. The bike was going well right up until a valve was ripped out of the rear tube," says Cecil. Suffice to say, there's more work to be done on the suspension and some heavier fork springs are being shipped from RaceTech in the USA which, it is hoped, will be a big improvement.

The bike rolls on a Honda wheel at the front; the twin leading shoe brake is standard Honda and well capable of coping with the power from the JAP engine, and it is matched at the rear by a wheel built round a Grimeca hub. "I chose the Grimeca because it's got a cush drive in the hub because the NEB speedway clutch doesn't have a cush drive in it and something is needed to take up the shock transmitted through the drive train by acceleration and landing," Cecil tells us. The hubs have alloy rims laced on and wear a Scorpion front tyre and a Maxxis on the rear.

Taking a look at the engine, it is fairly true to JAP's ideal, though is of 600cc rather than 500cc so still has ▶



SM Pro PLATINUM
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Above : For speedway, the oil pump would be well out of harm's way on this side of the engine. The gearbox is AMC's unit while the exhaust pipe is a Pearson Pipe.

Below: This particular Grimeca rear wheel has a cush drive in.

the long 99mm stroke. "I use a steel con-rod rather than the alloy one it should wear," Cecil says, "but in the main it's the same as standard inside." The crank cases are Elektron castings on which sits a cast-iron barrel, the rocker arms run in needle roller bearings, lubrication is by the speedway racer's favourite oil… Castrol R. "It's on the total loss oiling system as methanol is a dirty fuel and can contaminate the oil, and I'd rather not have to deal with problems of dirt in the lube," says Cecil.

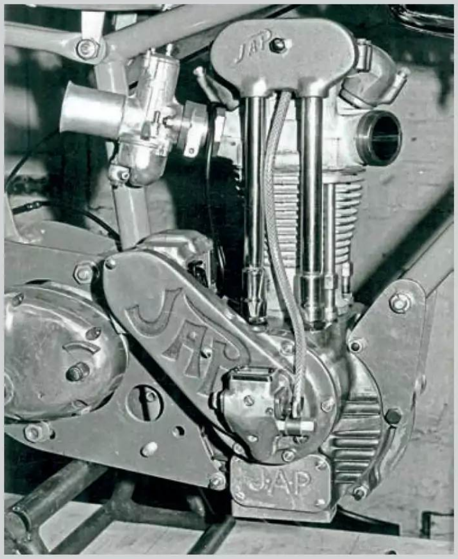
Storage for the oil is a neat alloy box, made by Cecil himself and mounted under the Italian carb but above the engine plates. There's room enough for oil to last a couple of races at least. While mentioning the carburettor, Cecil said it is the same type as used by all of the bikes he runs, "As we've got half-a-dozen bikes on the go it sort of makes sense to standardise a few areas such as the carburettor and controls; it cuts down on the number of bits we have to cart around with us."

A glance around the paddock will show the number of non-unit engines using the AMC gearbox as Cecil does; this is a fairly strong unit, based on the Burman but different. It's strong enough for use on Norton Wasp sidecar outfits so can cope with a speedway engine. Connecting the two units – engine and gearbox – is a primary drive and while it is a chain system – riveted rather than spring link – there is a departure from standardisation here. The rest of the bikes run a Norton clutch which has a cush drive in but as we said earlier, this one has an NEB speedway unit in. While there are six springs providing grip there isn't a cush drive, hence the Grimeca rear hub.

ACCIDENTAL STAR

For an engine which came to have a virtual monopoly on a sport, the JAP 500cc speedway engine didn't have the most auspicious of introductions. Its story starts in the heady days of the late twenties when speedway was gaining popularity and almost every major manufacturer offered a dirt track model. It wasn't long before really only two machines were serious contenders, with Rudge's four-valve single coming to dominate, though being pushed by Douglas' flat twin. A comment to JAP people at the 1929 motorcycle show by a known exponent of the new sport resulted in an engine being cobbled together from stock JAP parts, such as the 350 racer bottom end, 500 racer middle, and topped by the 350 roadster cylinder head. By all accounts it was workmanlike but didn't top the Rudge opposition.

JAP had another look at it, made some improvements, and next time out the engine was used to win 14 meetings in a row. The JAP Speedway engine had arrived. It still needed refining. Indeed, refinements continued up until the 4B version was introduced in 1967. First big change was adding another cylinder stud to the engine in the mid-thirties, then enclosing the valves in 1937, and according to Jackson's, the manufacturer's literature, it was back to four-stud in 1949. After then though, very little else until the late sixties when the cylinder head was opened out to accommodate Amal's new 932 Concentric carb. By this time the engine was being produced by Alec Jackson Motors as JAP were long consigned to history. In all other respects it was the same basic design from the thirties, and indeed the announcing letter to the press highlights this connection to those far-off days.



The 4B engine unit being fitted to a grass track bike, according to the caption on the rear of the print.

Holding the engine and gearbox in place is a job done by aluminium engine plates which Cecil cuts out by hand. "We've experimented and got the engine positioning correct for weight distribution and all we had to do was make a primary drive case," the retired plant hire businessman tells me. This primary case is a very simple affair from thin alloy sheet and a budget supermarket frying pan… Yup, you read correctly there… 'frying pan'. "I don't have any fancy tooling or presses in the workshop," he grins, "and the frying pan looked about right to go over the clutch basket; a bit of tapping with a hammer and it was the right shape, and once ▶

Below: From the Wulfsport Maico collection, stunning tank.

welded in it looked fine. We're not going to say which supermarket provided this frying pan, but it rhymes with 'middle'… The primary cover is just a cover; the chain and clutch run dry, or more correctly the clutch is dry while the chain has a squirt of lube every so often.

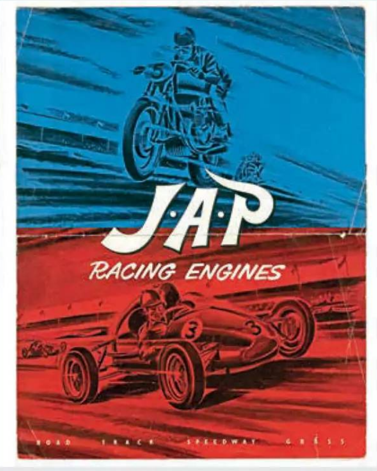
Providing the ignition was originally done by magneto, an aircraft one by the late sixties. However, the world of sparks has moved on considerably and while once a novelty, the electronic ignition has become the mainstay of igniting the mixture. So, Cecil, what electronic ignition system have you on here then? "It's a trade secret," he says knowingly. "I make it myself…" Also self-made in the Pearson workshop are the mounting bolts and studs, footrests and the side panels which finish off the bodywork so neatly. "I make all my own cables, too; stainless steel wire and outer sheathing from Venhill with nipples soldered on using silver solder." Cecil can't, and doesn't, lay claim to the handsome tank topping the frame; it came from Wulfsport boss Bill Brown's Maico parts stock, as did the seat. Finishing off the bike are things like the mudguards which are period plastic, and Renthal handlebars and controls which are nothing fancy, "I pick them up at Telford," he smiles. "They're good enough for what we need, common to the whole fleet, and cheap enough to replace in the event of an off." To be fair, given the calibre of rider mounted on Cecil's bikes 'offs' don't often happen.

As we looked over the bike I quizzed Cecil about his maintenance routine on all of the machines, and not just this one. "There's not a lot to do, I just try to keep on top of what needs doing. The engines are not highly tuned. Perhaps I could do with a bit more power," he muses, "but it's getting a different cam which is the real problem; the one I use is the original type. If you know of anyone who does a high-performance cam for this engine I'd love to hear about it." He did give one little bit of information away by saying the most important thing he does is make sure the carburetion is set correctly, plus the bike's tick-over. "You're never going to get off the line if the bike won't run low down."

Typically, there are a few things which are experimental in this build, one being the exhaust system. "This was the easiest way to route it," says Cecil. "I was going to wrap it round the front of the engine, but it already has marginal cooling and an exhaust pipe in the way of the airflow won't help, so maybe it will stay where it is." He added that once the frame is finally finished, with a few more brackets to determine their position, it will probably be nickel plated to make it look nice. cdb

JA PRESTWICH IN 100 WORDS

John Alfred Prestwich began manufacturing scientific instruments under the name JA Prestwich and Company in 1895. The fledgling company introduced a motorcycle engine in 1902. By 1911 it had moved to Northumberland Park, producing engines for a number of end users in the automotive, aero and motorcycle industry. JAP was to become synonymous with speedway and similar sports, as well as the early 500cc race car scene. By 1951 the company was taken over by JA Prestwich Industries Ltd., and by 1957 most shares were owned by Villiers. JA Prestwich Industries Ltd. was liquidated in 1964 and JAP was no more.



JAP's brochure for their race engines.

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Left: Superb suspension from Ohlin…

Below: Plenty of room for the tyre here under suspension compression.

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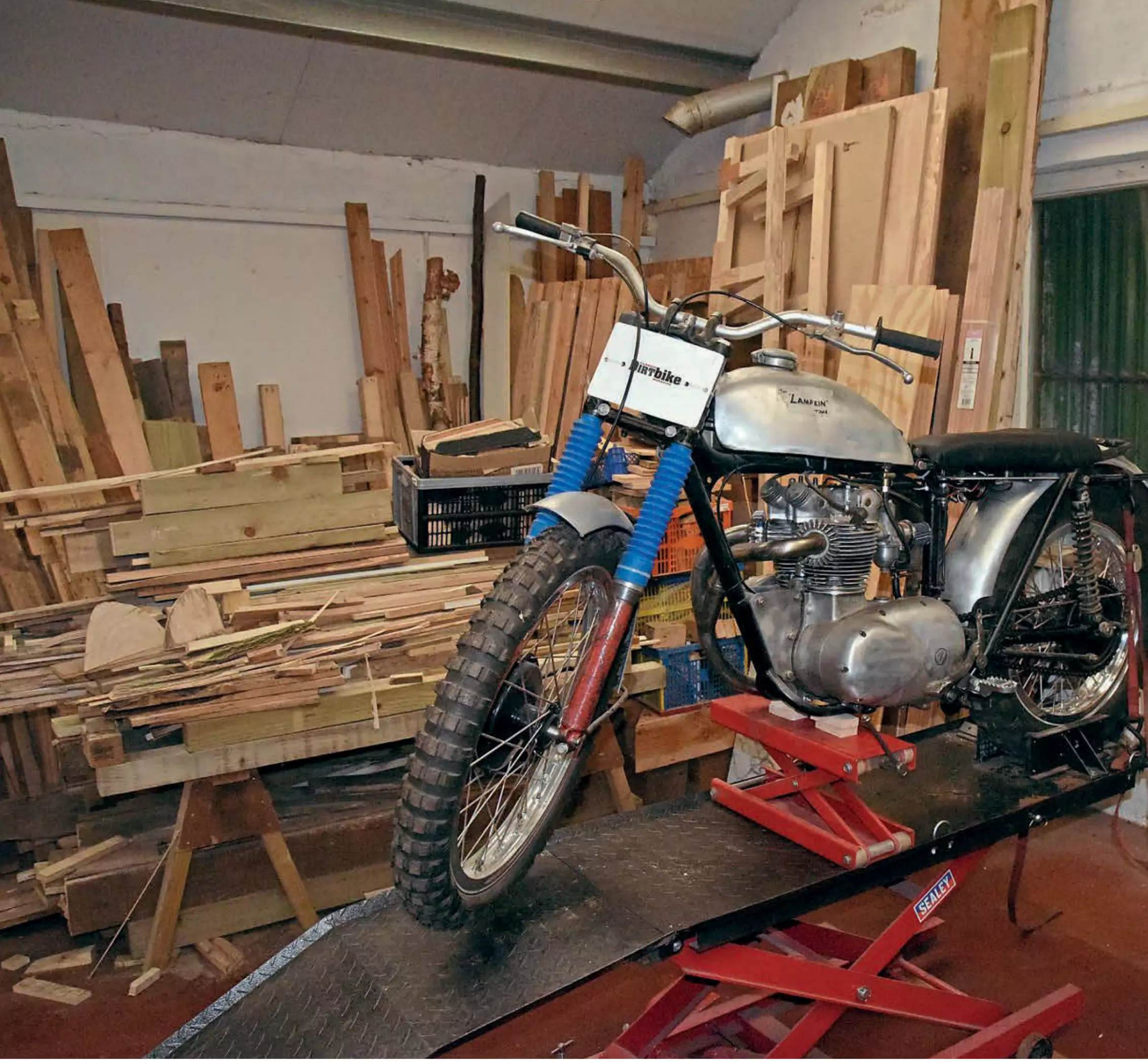


Work time

With a shed full of dirt bikes there's always a task to do. Sometimes the task is because there's a bee in the bonnet about something.

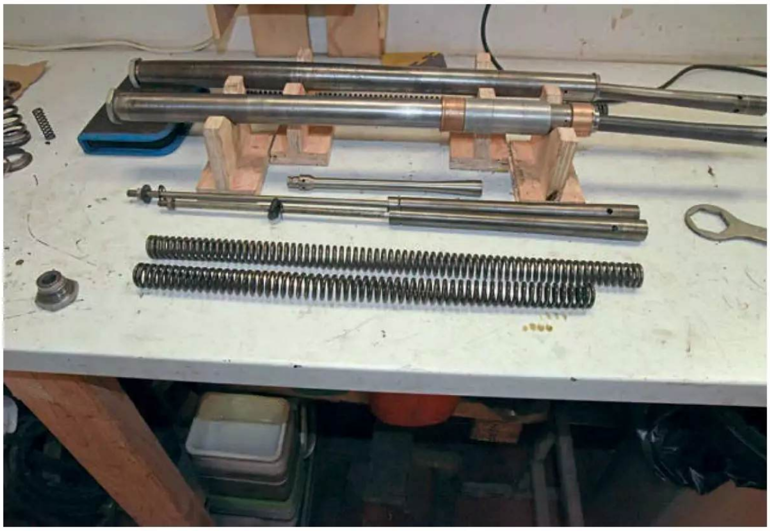
Words and **pics** Tim Britton Media Ltd

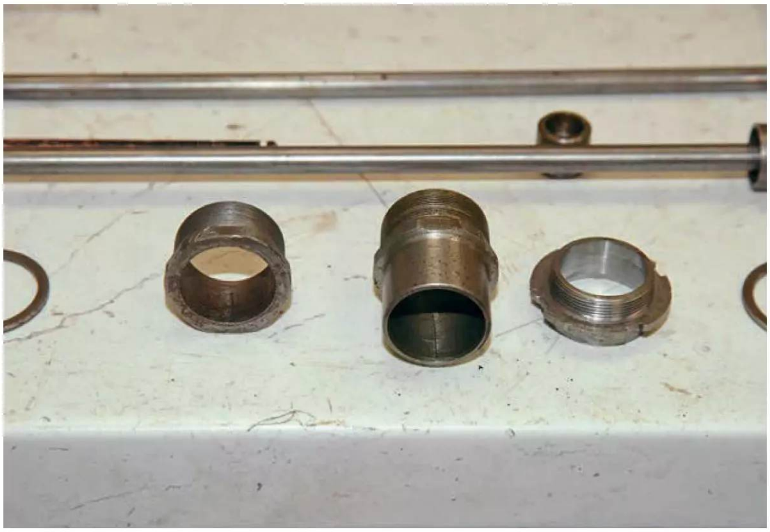
Above: Well, it is one bit and works, Time to improve…

While the ultimate aim of building a classic dirt bike is to use it in classic dirt bike events, such a project often has more than one aim. Where this Triumph is concerned, there have been several aims. Initially, it was to see if a working Brit bike could be assembled from bits lying around and was featured in our sister publication The Classic MotorCycle. Alongside this, as the bike is mine rather than the publisher's, I wanted a bike for classic sport.

These two aims don't always sit well together, as to be competitive a bike has to have a shilling or 20 pushed at it and the TCM thing was 'budget, budget, budget'. With the TCM phase now over and the concept vindicated, I'm looking at more work on the project, but it is never as simple as just chucking money at it.

While glancing through various things on the internet, the search algorithms which ensure that similar things to what you've looked at appear – in this way they





Top: BSA forks had springs on the outside. Triumph – of this era at least – had them on the inside and had ones of different lengths, too, depending on the model.

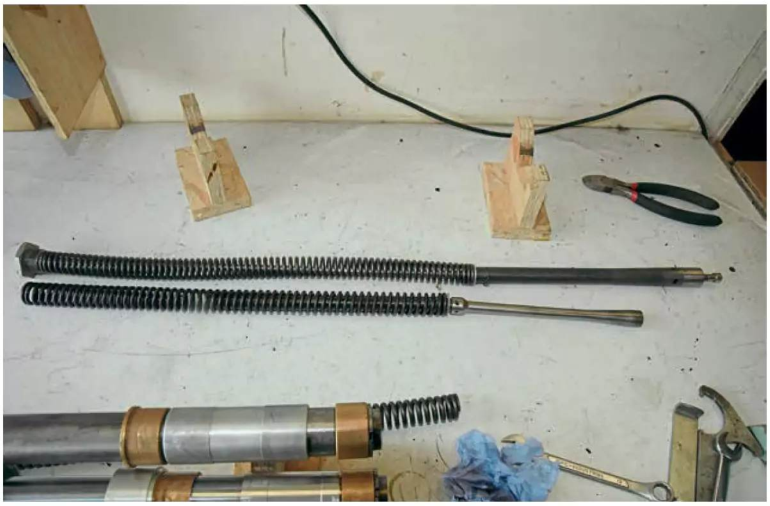
Above: Three examples of the bit wot goes on t'end of the stanchion to hold the bush in place… Of course, there were official names for these. On the right is Triumph's bearing nut, while the other two are BSA's fork stanchion plugs.

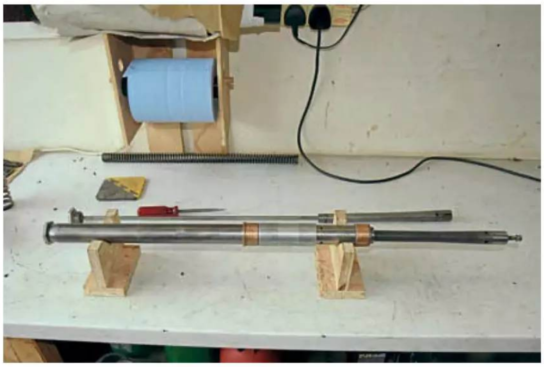
Right: These bits go inside the damper and control the oil flow… See the line drawing for how they work.

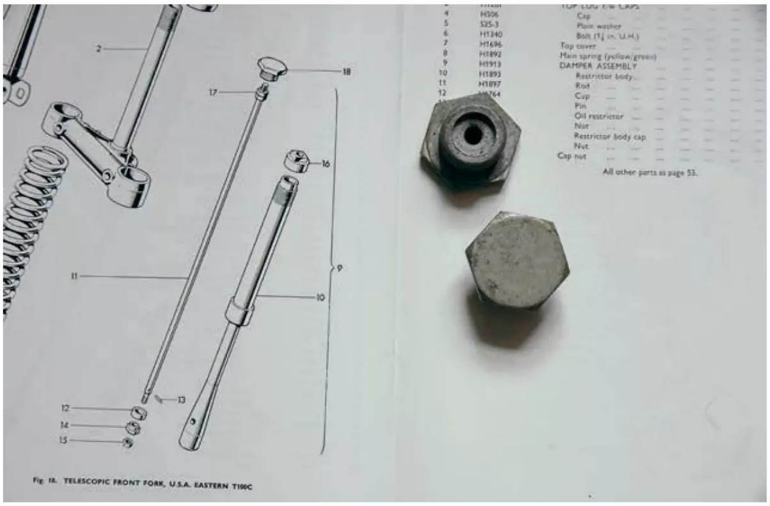
can blinker your focus and control what you see (cue maniacal laughter) – chucked up a hot-looking, mid-sixties desert racer Triumph by an outfit called Hello Engine. The info on the build suggested the builder got caught up in the 'Wonder if I can do it with totally period parts' ethos and it seemed like he'd achieved this. In the words accompanying this Triumph, a TR6, the build behind it was explained as,: "I wanted an authentic period bike built from bits from 1965," and the thought process for my project became… 'Wonder if I could do the same using mostly sixties bits, but not just Triumph bits?…'

Why? Well, the whole classic scene has morphed into bikes which are so well modified they are way better than even works bikes of the actual classic era. I don't actually have an issue with such machines. As an example, the Velo I had on loan for a few months was superb and had a lot of the latest classic kit on it. However, I wanted to explore the sort of bike which could have been built in 1964/5. So, freed from the 'cheap as possible' constraints, I began this exploration. It helps that Don Morley's books uncovered some interesting facts about modifications and provided a starting point.

My first thing to look at was the front forks, already slightly modified. As they stood, they were made up from Triumph stanchions and BSA sliders with some engineering wizardry connecting the two as the bushes were different dimensions, and a better seal holder was made by Engineering Lad. There are still the Triumph internals inside as all I've done really is replace the Triumph slider with a BSA one, then my thoughts turned to better internal damping. I have four of the BSA damper rods, so fitting in with the ethos of using what I have and thinking that if this system was good ▶







4 H506
5 S25-3
6 H1340
7 H1696
8 H1892
9 H1913
10 H1893
11 H1897
12 H1764

TOP LUG F/W CAPS
Cap
Plain washer
Bolt (1¼ in. U.H.)
Top cover
Main spring (yellow/green)
DAMPER ASSEMBLY
Restrictor body
Rod
Cup
Pin
Oil restrictor
Nut
Restrictor body cap
Nut
Cap nut

All other parts as page 53.

BSA's new fork - line drawing

Developed in the heady world of international MX, BSA's new front fork design had to deal with extreme conditions as Jeff Smith took his team bike to victory. The damping mechanism is fairly simple and relies on oil passing through various holes and lifting a clack-valve under pressure. Then, when the suspension extends, the oil flows the other way but prevents metal-to-metal contact as the fork reaches full operating length. The rate at which this happens is controlled by tapering the damper tube and careful positioning of the transfer holes. Oil still inside the damper tube as it nears the top of its stroke is forced through the top bush and lubricates the bushes on the way back down.

Above left: Standard Triumph set up at the front, with BSA bits at the rear.

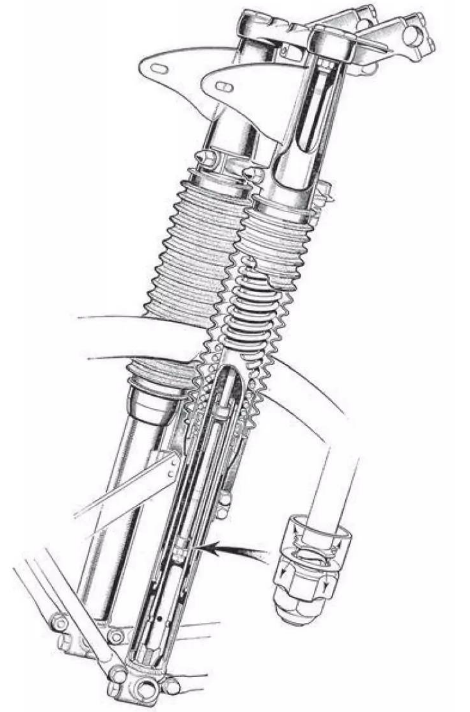
Below left: This was the Triumph damper for the competition forks with the nuts – part number 18.

Above right: BSA bits inside the Triumph stanchion with the standard Triumph bushes.

Below right: This is how the factory explained the process.

enough for Jeff Smith to win a world championship then it should be okay for Tim Britton to wobble around a club scramble… or enduro and enjoy better suspension.

With this in mind, a BSA and Triumph stanchion were placed side by side and the damper from the BSA fitted inside the Triumph. First thing is that the Triumph stanchion is a lot shorter than the BSA one. Even allowing for this, I'll replace the 3TA stanchions with the slightly longer ones fitted to the TR6 and T120; they'll still be shorter than the BSA ones. This means the damper rods are too long, but longer is easier to cope with than shorter. On the bottom of either stanchion is a restrictor

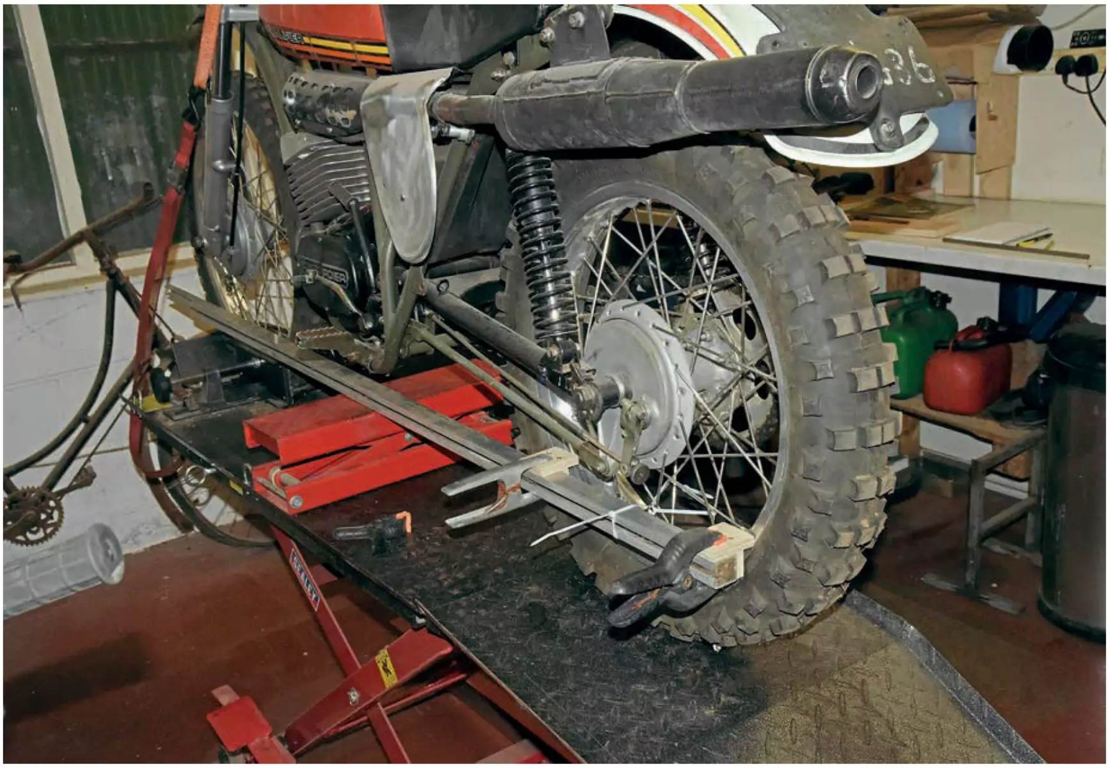


nut/flange, call it what you will, the BSA damper tube won't fit through the standard Triumph flange. Luckily, a small lathe is available and there's just enough room to fit the damper tube between the head and tail stock to relieve the diameter slightly, and the flange fits the chuck and can be bored out a little so now all fits.

Next issue is the fork top nut, which needs a tapped hole so the damper rod can be screwed into it. The BSA ones don't fit the Triumph stanchion, and I don't have any spare Triumph ones; even if I did, the way Triumph fork nuts are I'd have to bore a hole, tap it so the damper rod screws in, and put a domed nut over the top to make it look nice. Then I saw Triumph TT Bonneville fork nuts with a tapped blind hole in; they were the same price as standard ones and are now in the workshop.

Next bit is the spring… BSA fitted theirs on the outside, while the Triumph forks I have are still with internal springs. Everything fits inside the stanchion so there's no issue there, but the springs available are way too long. I checked the length, which should be in a TR5A/C which has the longer stanchions as standard, and it is seventeen-and-three-quarter inches. As the BSA damper tube is longer, then the Triumph one there needs to be a shorter spring of the same poundage to go in place. Basic

Above: A fairly grotty example of the BSA set up…



Below: There's nothing too fancy about my wheel alignment equipment; seen in period magazines are string, plank and laser methods… Whatever works for you.

measuring suggests a couple of inches shorter will do.

Before finalising this, however, I need to shorten the damper stroke by a couple of inches, which will involve some machining of bits. Before anyone says, 'Triumph did a damper in 1965'… they did, and a pair came up on the internet. The cost, although high, was not too high; it was the carriage from the USA which discounted things. Equally, there will be those who say, 'Why're you faffing about like this when better forks are available?' True, they are, but I enjoy this faffing about.

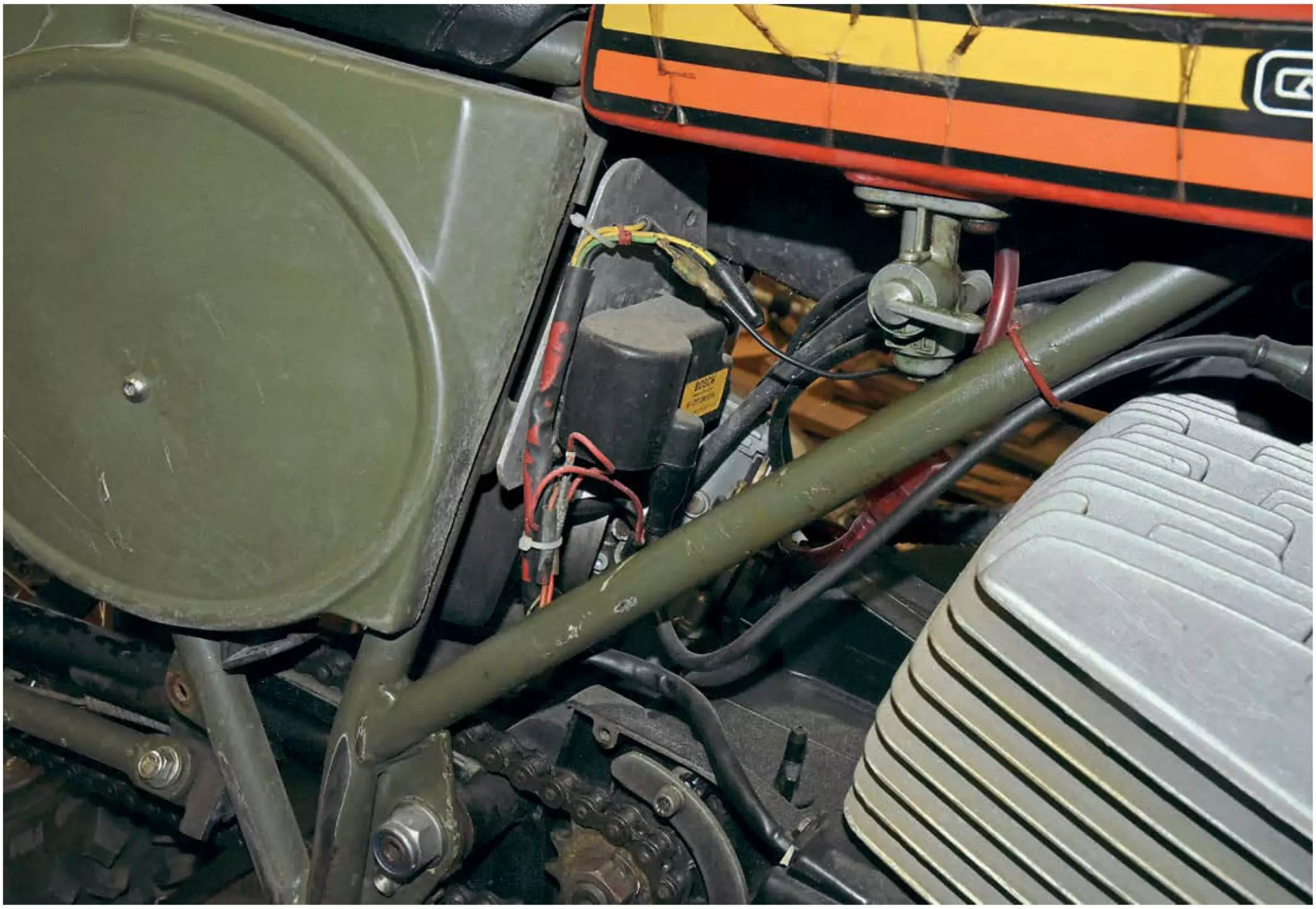
So, experimentation, and as most people reading this will appreciate, mixing and matching bits is never straightforward and apart from the actual fitting together part, there are things such as oil holes to check out. At this point I'm going to leave it as is and see if they need changing.

Some Can-Am attention

With the Triumph having come to a break and my Bultaco waiting for a bit of welding, there was a chance to cast an eye over the Can-Am to see if it could be advanced to being registered. Arguably, it could be registered as it is. There's no need for lights; a battery electric horn is easily fitted and meets the legal requirements; a chain guard is in the spares box, though having a look at it reminds me it is an ex-military one and quite heavy. With the deft manipulation of some sheet aluminium a lighter one could be fabricated, so this isn't a problem.

However, I fancy adding lights to this package, for no other reason than at the moment I don't have a bike with lights in the shed. With this in mind, I had a rake through the spares box again and there are all sorts of lights available, including the 6-inch competition

▶

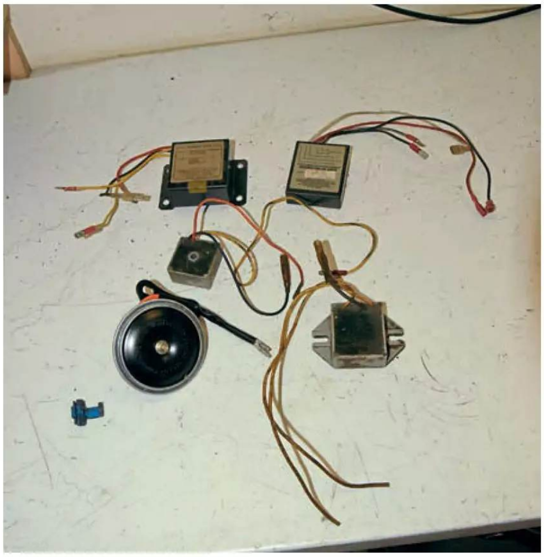


Above: Some of these wires provide power to lights and stuff.

Below left: A fairly heavy chainguard, the cutout goes behind the rear damper on the standard Military swinging arm. As the swinging arm fitted is from the Qualifier, the guard doesn't fit,

Left: Part of the lighting and ignition equipment… No, it's not going on and is for illustration purposes only.

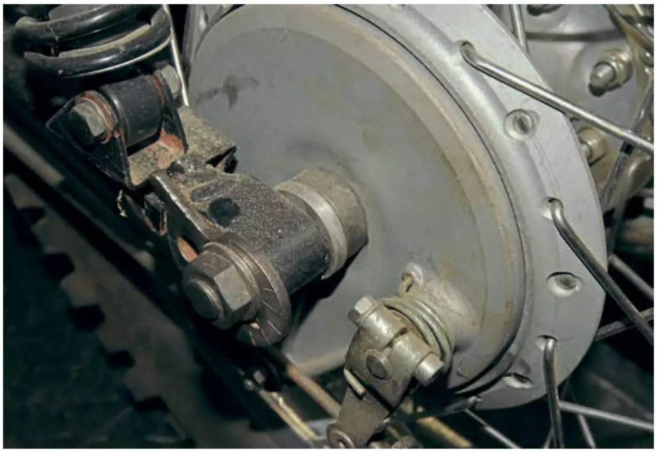
Right: At the rear are Boyer Bransden Powerbox components, while at the front are standard Can-Am bits.



headlights used on the Can-Am in military mode, plus a whole load of electrical fitments designed to control the electric from the alternator and route it to the lights.

There're relays, switches, keys and horns, and the wiring diagram appears to show that a good few miles of wire is needed to connect things, plus there's a battery in the mix. Thing is, I'm not entirely sure that all these components are needed, and when Project Can-Am was done in CDB some years ago, Ferret's custom electrickery devised a lovely system which had a minimum of parts and was reliable. The brief then was a bright white light at the front, dippable, and a red light at the rear which was also a brake light, no battery and waterproof. This brief is remarkably similar to what I need now and if I can find the pics from the feature we did back then I'll be able to suss out what bits I have and what's needed. Of course, I could always contact Ferret…

One thing I have been meaning to do for a while is



NORTH EAST VINDURO CLUB
MOTUL
128
Calibrate
G. DOUGLAS TIMBER HAULAGE
Mike Hope of Wooler Ltd
Can-Am

Above left: As the wheel is from the Military model and the swinging arm isn't, there needs to be an extra spacer until such time as the actual dimension is determined, and one single bit can be made.

Above right: A rear lamp is needed… Oh, look, here's one.

Below: A Preston Petty headlamp is available.

check the tracking as there's been so many miscellaneous bits added to the bike with the rear wheel being from one model, the swinging arm from another, and both wheels having alloy rather than steel rims. There're a few spacers involved to take up the gap at the end of the swinging arm, but things need to be centralised or at least checked.

As most readers will appreciate, a few things need to be right for the wheel alignment to be spot on. A big part is the chain alignment, and this is a constant as the engine – on a Can-Am at least – is a fixed point. There are distance pieces and engine plates which bolt in, and as they're the originals, then the assumption is the engine is correctly placed in the frame. From there, the gearbox sprocket is attached to the main shaft with the original parts, so again the assumption is the sprocket is in the correct position. From there though, there is a world of possibilities. With an enduro tyre on, there needs to be clearance in the swinging arm or the tyre will catch. Then, of course, the swinging arm needs to be in the correct position in the frame.

The swinging arm can be adjusted with shims, and the wheel can be adjusted with spacers, but neither should be adjusted until the chain alignment is correct. There're all sorts of tools and gizmos out there to check chain alignment, but for me a simple length of round bar does the job. From there, I've a length of aluminium box section long enough to go past both wheels. I made up some spacers from plywood; they clip on with spring clamps so the bar clears the tyre and allows me to measure the gap at the front wheel, and I was pleasantly surprised to find things were well within the service limits. I intend to check further when I pull the bike apart to change the frame colour from NATO Green to silver. I'll do the check with no tyres on when this stage is reached.

Then, of course, there is the sidecar option,, which opens up a whole new and exciting element to wheel alignment. Terms such as toe in, toe out, lead and so on come into play, although as the sidecar for the Can-Am is a fixed thing I have to accept it is correct as it is. Once a sidecar is fitted I've to find someone brave/daft enough to clamber in it, and preferably someone who hasn't seen me operate an outfit. cdb

PRODUCTS

Do you make or supply something for the sorts of motorcycles and riders we feature in *Classic Dirt Bike?* Well, this is the place to tell the world about your stuff. Either send it and we'll photograph it, or send a hi-res pic of it – at least 5mb – on a white background and tell us what it is, what it does, how much it costs and where to get it, so either call *CDB's* ad exec George Schofield on 01507 529451 or email him on GSchofield@mortons.co.uk and we'll do the rest.

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Oil is a contentious subject. To one owner only oil to the spec described in the handbook will do, while others have a more modern approach, but whatever side of this particular argument someone is, both sides can agree that the oil needs to be good quality and clean. So, this is where Mototec's range comes in as their range covers a multitude of specs, though the image supplied is of their castor-based two-stroke. There are also classic, traditional two-stroke oils, semi-synthetic and fully synthetic, too, plus a range of multigrade oils, transmission fluids – gearbox oils – monograde oils, suspension fluids to allow for fork tuning, chain lubes, degreasers and so much more. Visit their website and see what's there for you.

The bare bones
What is it? Castor-based two-stroke oil from Mototec's range
What's it do? Lubes your engine
What's it cost? Depends on quantities and which one you choose.
Where d'you get it? www.mototeclubricants.co.uk

ON GUARD

The underside of a motorcycle can be vulnerable to damage, especially if the motorcycle is used in an off-road environment, and it wouldn't take much to turn a podium finish into a DNF. The thing to do is fit the underside with a sump guard which deflects all sorts of damaging scenery from… well… doing damage. The one shown is for BSA's C15S of 1966/67 and B40/B44GP models, too. They're shaped

to suit the underside of the frame and finished in black as per the original style. Even if your machine sees nothing more than Tarmac, using a sump guard is a sensible addition as a stone thrown up from the road can also do damage to the underside of the engine.

The bare bones
What is it? A sump guard for the BSA C15S 1966-1967 and B40/B44 GP up to 1967.
What does it do? Protects the underside of the bike.
What's the cost? £31 plus VAT and some delivery.
Where d'you get it? Burton Bike Bits, www.britishbikebits.com Tel: 01530 564362

TANK TOP

See the alloy box on top of your dirt bike, the bit where you pour petrol in before the start of an event? Imagine if the filling hole didn't have a cover, all the petrol would slosh out, which wouldn't be a good idea at all. If you've an OSSA TR80 Gripper and need a new tank cap then you're in luck, as Martin Rickman at Idleride has these smart new ones made for his tanks we featured in the last issue. Made from aluminium, they incorporate a breather and have the OSSA logo engraved in.

The bare bones
What is it? A replacement petrol tank cap for OSSA's TR80 Gripper.
What's it do? Stops petrol sloshing out of the petrol tank.
What's it cost? Check Martin's website for the latest costs.
Where d'you get it? Martin Rickman at Idleride www.idleride.co.uk email hello@idleride.co.uk or call him on 07981 113152.

KICKING OFF

Pre-electric start days, the way a motorcycle fired up was to fold out a lever on the side of the engine and give it a kick. Even though such an attachment was operating within its design brief, it still had a hard life. This working life was made even harder by the kickstart pivots being immersed in muck as well as gritty water, which is all well and good if it is stripped and cleaned regularly. When was the last time you did your kickstart? So, the pivot becomes sloppy, and the bearing catch can't hold it in place, which means it flops about and can get damaged. So, if you're using a KTM 400/620/625/640/660 LC4 model from 1994-2007, take the chance and visit Andre Horvath's Enduro Klassiker and treat the bike to a new kickstart.

Bare bones
What is it? A new aluminium kickstart lever for KTM 400/620/625/640/660 LC4 models 1994-2007.
What's it do? Replaces the old kickstart.
What's the cost? €189 plus postage.
Where d'you get it? Go to www.enduroklassiker.com or email office@enduroklassiker.at or call them 0043 676574 51 91

TAKE A BREATH

eeping an engine working to its best ability is an eclectic task which involves many different areas all working together and being in prime condition. One area which often causes most heartache is the bit which gets the fuel mixture from the carburettor to the engine… aka 'the inlet tract'. Any problems here and there's no chance the engine will run right and an actual chance of the weakened mixture causing engine harm. Believe it or not, the little rubber bits in the middle of this tract actually wear or deteriorate and once they do, air can get in where it's not expected and no amount of fiddling with carburettor settings will help. The only cure is replacement, and if your chosen bike is a KTM 125 GS/EXC/MX/SX 1987-1997 Engine Type 502 then Andre Horvath's recently introduced intake rubber flange will sort your inlet tract right out.

Bare bones
What is it? An intake rubber flange KTM 125 GS/EXC/MX/SX 1987-1997 Engine Type 502.
What's it do? Replaces the old split one.
What's the cost? €59.50 plus postage.
Where d'you get it? Go to www.enduroklassiker.com or email office@enduroklassiker.at or call them 0043 676574 51 91

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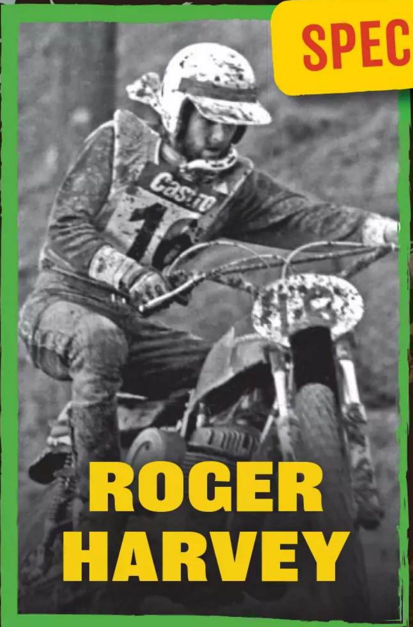
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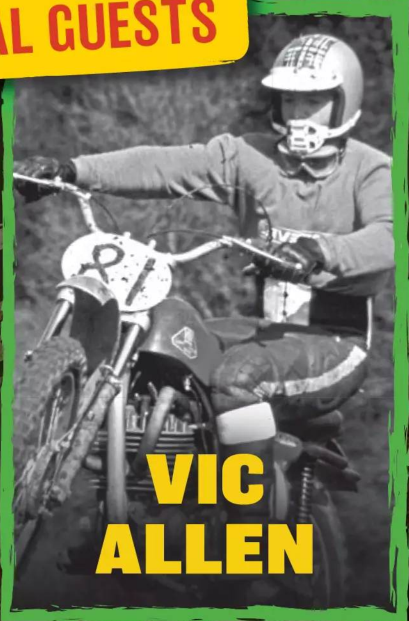
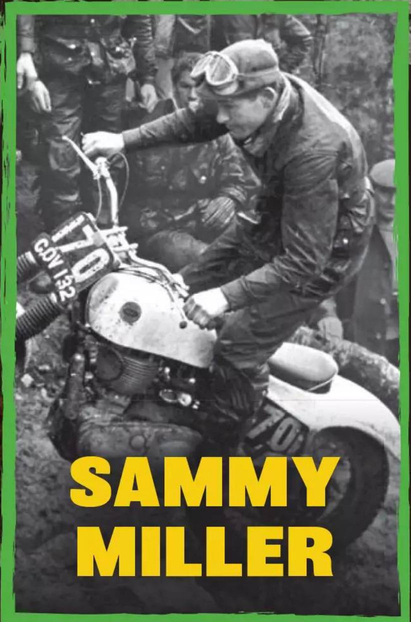

VIC ALLEN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BSA Bantam D10 & D14/4, B175 - *ign. only*	STK-175	£252
BSA, Triumph, Norton, Royal Enfield	STK-102D	£339
Bultaco Sherpa - *uses original rotor*	STK-154	£238
Bultaco Pursang - *single spark*	STK-150	£324
CZ - single port	STK-950	£281
Husqvarna CR400, CR500	STK-185	£310
Husqvarna WR125, WR250 - *ignition only*	STK-019	£252
KTM 250 MX (replaces SEM) - *ignition only*	STK-025	£252
Maico 440/490	STK-113/TC	£324
Maico 400 (early model)	STK-114	£267
Montessa 348/349	STK-349	£310
Norton Commando - *ignition only*	STK-022D	£324
Triumph 3TA, 5TA, Unit 650 - *ignition only*	STK-012	£267
Triumph Tiger Cub - *Direct mounting in cover*	STK-200	£252
Triumph Tiger Cub - *Crank case mounted*	STK-202	£252
Villiers 9E-37A models *(through our distributor)*	STK-970	£339
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Yamaha TY175/125	STK-475	£252
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Yamaha XS650 - *ignition only*	STK-465	£267
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STK-102D BSA, Norton, Triumph

STK-405 Yamaha: TT600, XT500

STK-950 CZ: (single port)

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Leven Valley Two Day Trial

A tale of two halves, one dry, the other wet…

Words and pics John Dickinson

Cumbrian Will Brockbank nailed the Premier Award in the 2025 Leven Valley Two Day Trial, which was staged as usual in the low-lying woodland and, of course, up on the moors surrounding Kinlochleven, deep in the Scottish Highlands.

Above: Adam Raga splashes upstream at Lower Mamore on the rasping Triumph twin.

Huddersfield's Will Tolson, a first-timer at the event, joined Brock on a clean ride but lost out on the tie-break (oldest rider wins) and had to settle for runner-up. Brock was mounted on an immaculate 500 Ariel four-stroke Britshock single while Tolson relied on his

KINLOCHLEVEN & DISTRICT MCC
204
206
205

Above right: Flanked by cousins Tyler and Calum Murphy, Adam Raga looks forward to his first Leven Valley Two Day.

Below: The winner, Will Brockbank kept his feet on the Ariel's pegs through all 60 sections to bag the Premier award.

trusty Fantic two-stroke Twinshock, proving that it isn't the bike, it is down to the rider. The event caters for just the two classes.

The weekend of 26/27 September saw the now usual format of a single long lap, taking in 30 sections along the way, each day. Saturday saw the monster 280 rider entry heading up on to the moors to skirt the imposing Blackwater Reservoir and atmospheric Loch Eildhe before descending back down to the village. Sunday then gave the survivors the easier day's route, a superb return trip along the picturesque Mamore Road as far as the Sleubhaich sections.

Saturday saw unsettled weather with persistent rain, but this was offset by competitors getting to ride the famous Pipeline section, something they thought wouldn't happen this year due to heavy maintenance work on the pipes.

Special Guest this year was six-time Trial World Champion (two TrialGP, four X-Trial) Adam Raga, the Sherco factory rider flying over from Barcelona to ride Kinlochleven club 'Governer' (it says so on his bike's front number board!) Martin Murphy's 350 Triumph twin.

Adam, now 43 and retired from the World Championship following a long and distinguished career, really enjoyed rasping round on the big twin and in the end only just missed out on a clean ride. He got to within four sections of the finish before casting a dab to finish in third place.

That was a close-run thing though, as he had to edge out Ben Hodgson and James Black on Dots, the ever-competitive James Noble on the 500 Ariel, and Liam Robinson's lone Greeves, as all four matched the single dab of the Catalan ace.

Raga also brought his dad Josep (an early retirement) and half- a-dozen pals including Carlos ▶

Above : Fantic Twinshock power saw first-timer Will Tolson net the runner-up berth after the tie-break.

Below left: Liston Bell is a big machine man whether scrambling or trials riding, and the Royal Enfield fits the bill.

Below right: Bultaco power for Boyd Webster who remains loyal to the famous Barcelona brand.

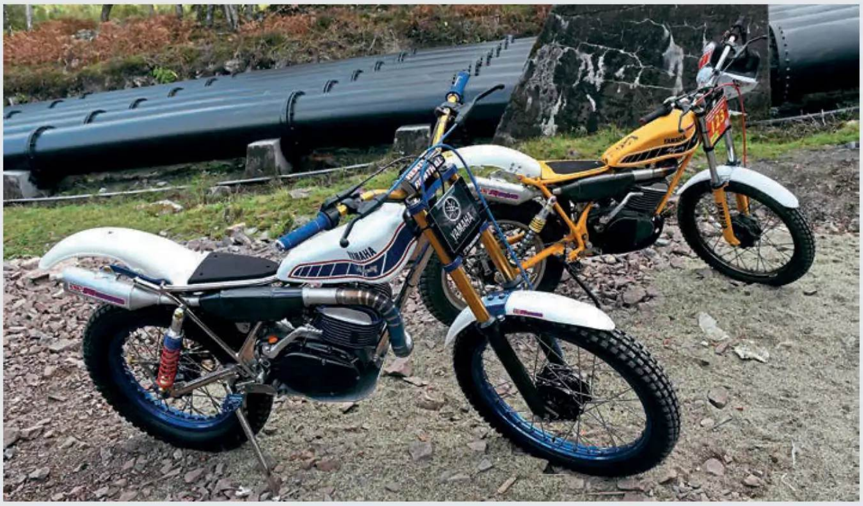
MURPHY'S MAJESTY

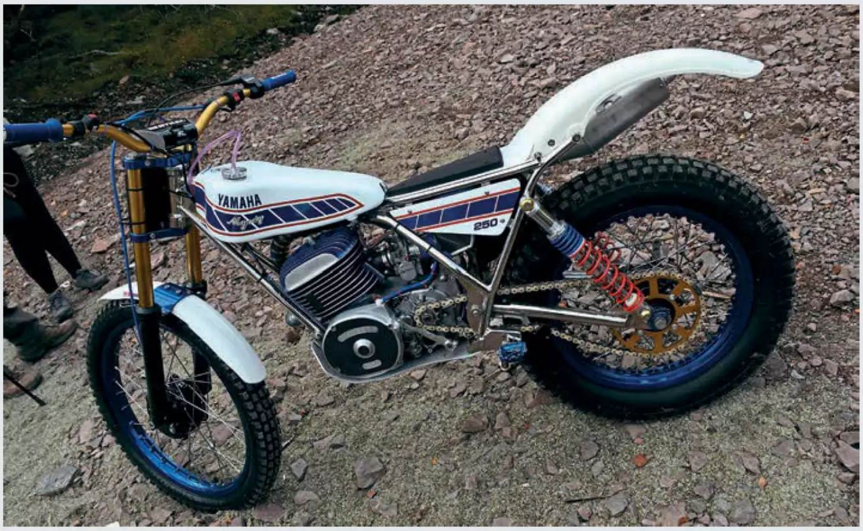
Ulster enthusiast Stephen Murphy likes his Yamahas and Majesties, having built several shiny examples, including one with a TY250 twinshock motor wedged into a Drayton chassis.

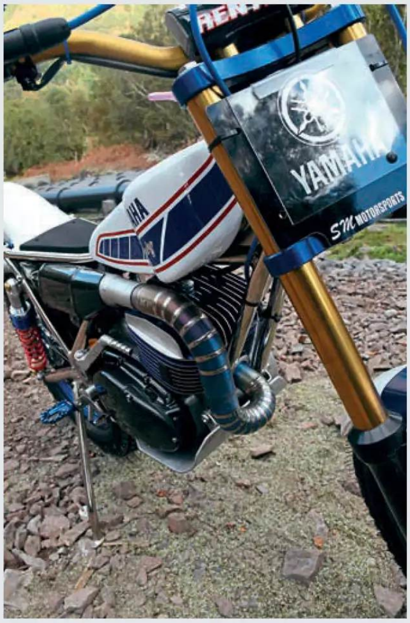
This year he went further and got the Drayton boys to knock up a Majesty replica frame - with 'modern' footrest placement - which he had chrome plated as per the original John Shirt Majesty 'S' spec.

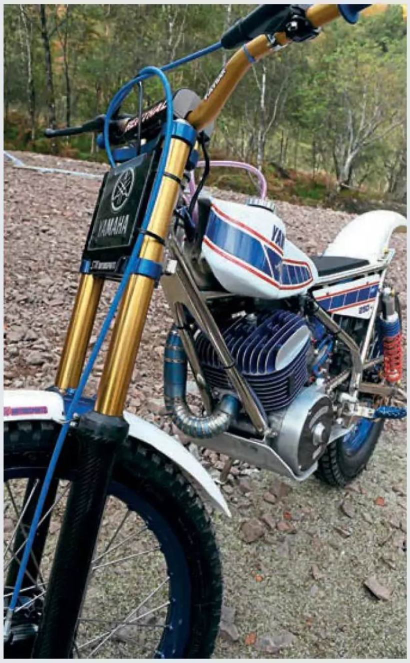
Wheels are Yamaha TY mono items which offer much better and lighter brakes - although Stephen's wheel builder found that matching the rear Z spokes to a new tubeless rim was a pain in the spoke nipples! TY mono forks complete the picture up front.

Stephen entrusts his Yam engines to Nigel Birkett who bores the barrels extra-tight as he knows that Stephen runs them in properly and they are very quiet mechanically. There's lots of detail work as you can see, like that lovely titanium front pipe that feeds the lightweight exhaust silencer. And check out that Mick Andrews style aluminium fuel tank...


Stephen Murphy's latest build, a stunning Majesty.


Well, just look at the workmanship of the tank… and the finish on the frame.


It would be a shame to cover this excellent exhaust pipe with paint or something.


No matter the angle it is photographed at, it's a stunning bike.

Casas who has competed in over 30 Scottish Six Day trials.

A fourth section five effectively ended the chances of last year's winner, Ulster's Andy Perry, defending his crown, and later clutch slip on his Honda TLR compounded his problems.

As expected these days, Hondas and Fantics dominated the Twinshocks, but there was representation from the likes of SWM, Gori, Beta, Beamish (okay, just one from Neil Bowker and all the way from the south coast), and even a Kawasaki, Roy Palmer's infamous KL250 four-stroke special named Ratta, piloted by fellow Yorkshireman, Nigel Scott.

Britshocks was the usual collection of lightweight Drayton Bantams plus James, FB, Dot Villiers singles, Cub and BSA unit four-stroke singles, beefy Ariel and Royal Enfield singles and Triumph twins, plus exotica like the mighty 600cc AJS, built by Gerry Minshall,

13
BEAMISH SUZUKI

Above : Only one Beamish Suzuki from 280 entries thanks to Neil Bowker, all the way from the south coast.

Left: The workers - as represented by clerk of course Jim Tenant and Kinlochleven club chairperson Martin Murphy laughing at the rain on Saturday.

Below left: Californian-based Brit Matt Bradbury bought the newbuild Drayton Majesty from constructor, Ulster enthusiast Stephen Murphy, rode it in the Leven Two Day, and planned to ship it stateside...

RESULTS

Premier:	William Brockbank (Ariel) 0
Runner-up:	William Tolson (Fantic) 0
Third:	Adam Raga (Triumph) 1
Britshock to 201cc:	Paul Dennis (Bantam) 5
Britshock over 201cc:	Will Brockbank
Twinshock to 201cc:	Lewis Byron 6
Twinshock over 201cc:	Will Tolson
Best Honda:	Colin Ward 3
Best Drayton:	Robbie Weir 12
Best Ossa:	Joe Hutchinson 16
Best Bultaco:	Gareth Palmer 16
Best Yamaha:	Stephen Murphy 11
Best Lady:	Michelle Hanlon 87
Best SACU:	Liston Bell (Royal Enfield) 5
Best Newcomer:	Will Tolson
Best Overseas:	Adam Raga
Best Turned Out Bike:	Calum Murphy (AJS)
Best ACU:	Will Brockbank
Best Youth:	Ross Allen 7

owned by Martin Murphy and ridden well by his nephew Calum. The shiny Ajay was also judged to be the Best Turned Out Bike.

Most unusual machine was the Norton Navigator twin, with reversed cylinder head, of Aberdonian Keith White, as featured in a previous issue of CDB. There were several Norton big singles as well, the most successful piloted by Carl Batty who dropped just three marks.

Among the notable retirements - the event takes its toll, it is a real challenge for riders and bikes - were Robin Luscombe, Duncan MacDonald, Tim Blackmore, Darren Walker, Chris Garlick, Scot Murray Whittaker and Ulster's Gareth Andrews.

Win or lose, the Leven Valley cemented its reputation as THE classic event to ride, and proved yet again that the organisers can cope with close to 300 riders with minimal queuing and maximum enjoyment. cdb

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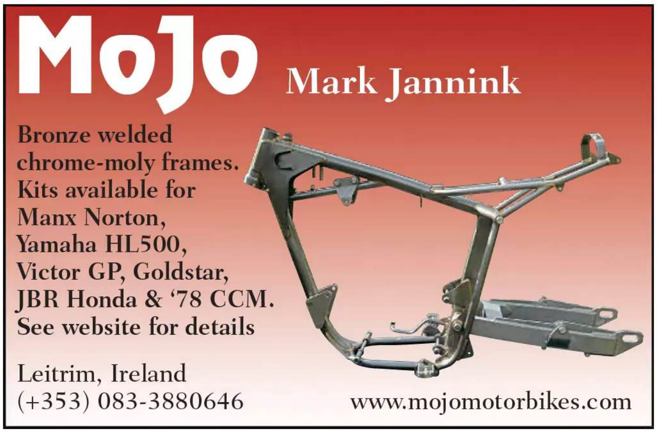
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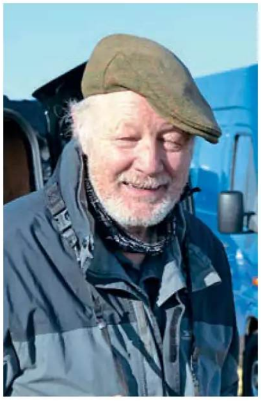

Normal service

Sometimes life chucks curveballs your way. How you deal with them is the thing.

> “We have said it many times, but one of the beauties of the Leven Valley is that it is a great leveller in terms of machinery…”

Due to circumstances beyond my control - thanks to a surprise dose of lymphoid cancer and its associated combined chemo/immuno treatment - I confess I haven’t actually been to any events in 2025 until relatively recently having, to my relief, been officially acclaimed ‘in remission’ by my brilliant, smiling, but hard-hitting consultant Dr Oo. Yes, really, Dr Oo!

Just wanted to abuse my privilege here and thank everyone who has inquired after my health and also publicly thank the NHS frontline staff who have been absolutely amazing. The NHS take a lot of flak, but from me seeing my GP to my first dose of chemo was just two weeks. Amazing service.

The Leven Valley Two Day had always been my target event to get back to normal - whatever normal is - and it was so brilliant to hit the road and be heading north, especially - with the motorways left behind - once up to Loch Lomond, Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy, Glencoe, Kinlochleven.. .Seriously, does it get better than that?

And does it get better than the Leven Valley Two Day? Hard to see how you can top a weekend in the Scottish Highlands with approaching 300 varied Britshocks and Twinshocks and, of course, their owners and riders who are every bit as diverse as the machinery!

Stopping for a chat with Mick Grant on the Friday evening, he told me that after the Leven Valley he was due to complete a veritable tour of Europe in his transporter, taking his Bantam to a bunch of top classic trials starting with Ventoux in France and ending with the Costa Brava in Spain.

When I suggested to him that it would be just like back in the day when he was travelling Europe to race in MotoGP, Granty laughed and said: “Yes, but not making quite as much money!”

We have said it many times, but one of the beauties of the Leven Valley is that it is a great leveller in terms of machinery. Two years ago, a bog-standard Yamaha 175 two-stroke in the hands of Cumbrian Stuart Gaskell and the 500 Ariel four-banger of Irishman Gordon Clarke both went round clean. You couldn’t get a more diverse comparison than a skippy little stroker and a lumbering pre-unit single.

Last year (after five riders went clean) the winner Andy Perry was mounted on a Honda TLR Twinshock, while this year Will Brockbank bagged the Premier on a Britshock Ariel after tying on clean with Will Tolson’s Fantic Twinshock.

Yes, the sections are deliberately kept short and easy(-ish) in order to keep the huge entry on the move, but there’s nothing wrong with that and it keeps the vast majority happy.

Over the weekend I nosed into - and levelled down - several learned conversations which circumnavigated the ‘development’ of various machines. Logic would tell you that Twinshocks ought by right to be superior and maybe now - with the ‘latest’ Honda TLR and Fantic models - they are.

But as we know, for the great majority of time since the Pre-65 movement has existed, this has not been the case and the relentless updates eventually resulted with the coining of the term Britshock. An eminently sensible development which allows the genuine Pre-65 irons to compete on their own terms, while the Britshocks/Twinshocks gradually merge into a single class.

How? Well, REH forks are already being slid into Twinshocks, while Twinshock motors have been shoehorned into Drayton frames and the crossover will only increase.

Everyone happy, surely? The purists will continue with their standard and standard(-ish) (how many are REALLY standard?) machines, while the Britshockers will continue to push the boundaries in the search for the ‘perfect’ trials machine.

Good luck with that...!

In the last issue of CDB we fondly remembered Yorkshire character Bill Wilkinson, but inevitably several other notables have since sadly slipped from this mortal coil and we find ourselves offering condolences to the families of Ken Sedgley and Terry Wright.

Ken was known throughout the off-road world as the face of Silkoline lubricants and known as Silky Sedge. “Sedge is the name and oil is the game!” was Ken’s mantra. He was a top scrambler in his day and a useful trials rider. Back in 1979 (having failed in the ballot to get a ride in the Scottish) I was in the Fort William parc ferme and heard Ken telling someone that he needed to prep his Montesa for the trial but was too busy selling oil (Putoline at the time), so I volunteered. I spent several useful hours installing new brake shoes, chain, cleaning the carb, etc., and Ken gave me a Putoline anorak in payment! It was always a pleasure to encounter Ken. Softly spoken and with plenty of stories, he will be greatly missed by those who knew him.

Terry was a Huddersfield club stalwart who is probably best known for winning the 1970 Manx Two Day Trial mounted on one of Pete Edmondson’s 125cc Dalesmans. In the eighties, however, Terry was a regular contender at the Pre-65 Scottish Two Day where he dazzled in immaculate white overalls and his well-buffed Enfield Bullet. Older readers will also fondly remember Terry’s dad Harry, a lovely gentleman with a cheery word for everyone and a very popular observer.

WHO IS JOHN DICKINSON?

John Dickinson has been in, on and around the off-road scene for years. Trained as a mechanic, he spent some time in the motorcycle industry before finding his way into journalism. Thanks to his editorship of a certain weekly paper, he’s well known in the world of trials, MX and enduro. Oh, and he can ride a bit too.

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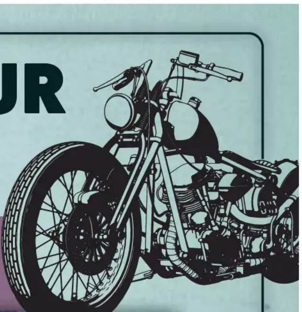

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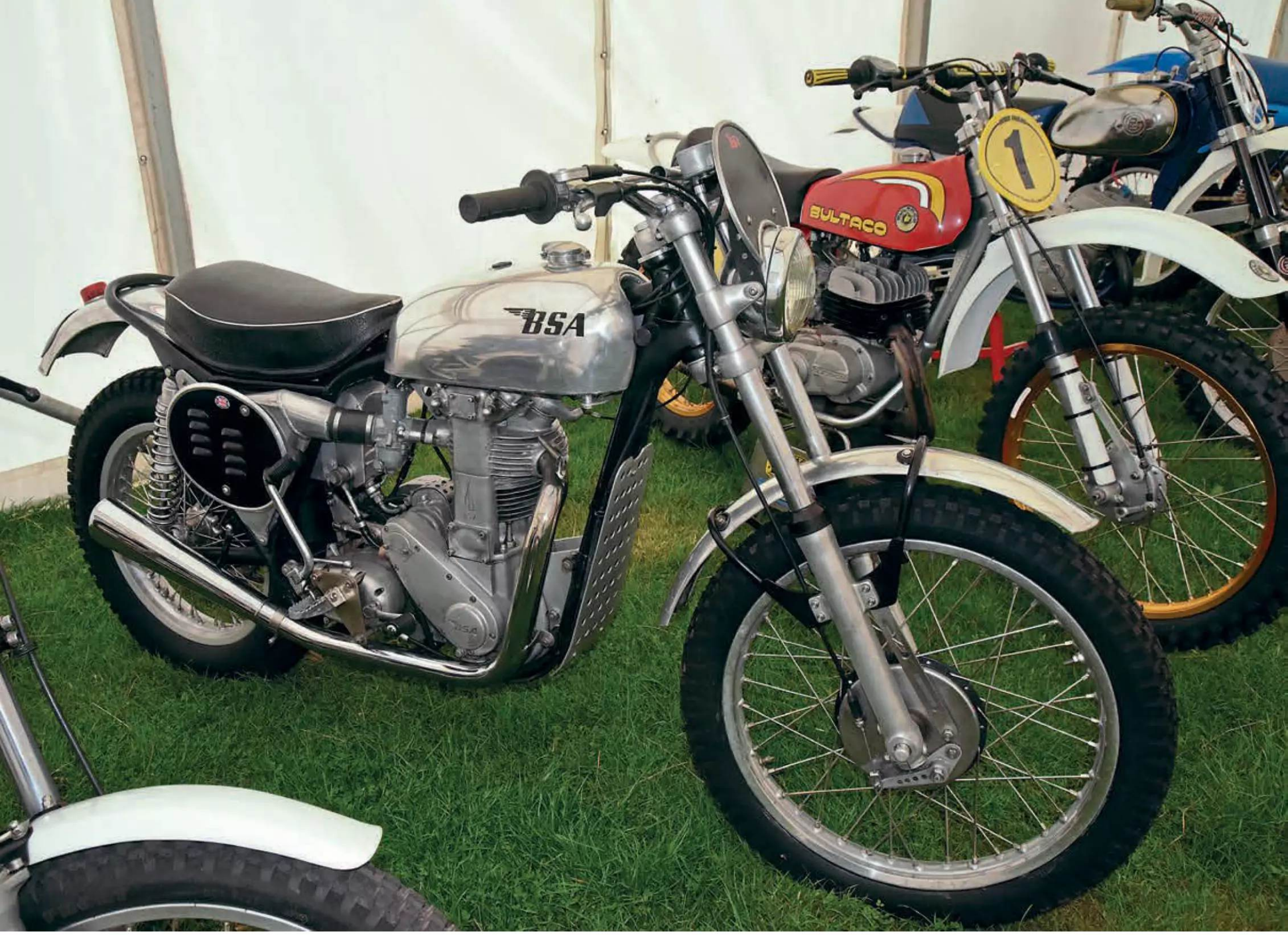


Drumlanrig Offroad Motorsport Festival

Is there a more regal setting for a scramble than Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfries and Galloway? Thought not.

Words and **pics** Tim Britton Media Ltd

With the stunning Drumlanrig Castle as a backdrop to a well-thought-out scrambles course, the stage was set for Galloway MCC's Drumlanrig Offroad Motorsport Festival over the weekend of 22-24 August, 2025. Even the weather played fair.

This spectacular celebration of motorcycling takes many forms. There are the road runs into south-west Scotland's magnificent scenery, then there's the Blue Machinery sponsored grasstrack racing which gives the chance for competitors to warm up before the MX racing begins on the Saturday. For those of us who take motorcycling at a slower pace, there is the trial laid out in Drumlanrig's grounds and for pre65 machines along with twinshocks, too, plus there's a section cordoned off in the marquee where a

▶

Above: It is fitting that a classic scramble should have the ultimate classic scrambler on view in the concours display. This one shows a few non-standard tweaks and is all the better for it.

CLASSIC BRITISH

When factories couldn't or wouldn't provide suitable machines then Eric Cheney could and would, and not just for scrambles but enduros, too… His Cheney Triumphs are a thing of beauty and also successful.

Bultaco were pretty full on in the MX world of the seventies; their man Vic Allan was noted for being at the front and indeed was 250 and 500cc British champion on the Spanish make.

Keith Barnes not only races CCM but also his bike displays many of the parts he supplies to other racers.

Joe Maxwell's CCM trials bike is a stunning example of a short-lived model from CCM. Joe's bike is a bit special as befits someone whose business is involved in sorting CCMs.

A name well known to Maico enthusiasts is Wulfsport and just to the right of the pic is Mr Wulfsport himself… Bill Brown.

Left: Take a 90-year-old engine design, pop it in a 50-ish-year-old frame design, add a determined rider or two, and see where you finish in the results… Yup, the sharp end. Calum Pearson 55 and James Thompson 26, just two of Cecil Pearson's Team JAP.

Team Hudson at Drumlanrig, James and his good lady. James is former 250 world champion Neil Hudson's lad.

As far as we know Gary Britton is no relation to the editor, but he is an enthusiastic rider… Suzuki TM mounted here, but also in the programme as using a Greeves.

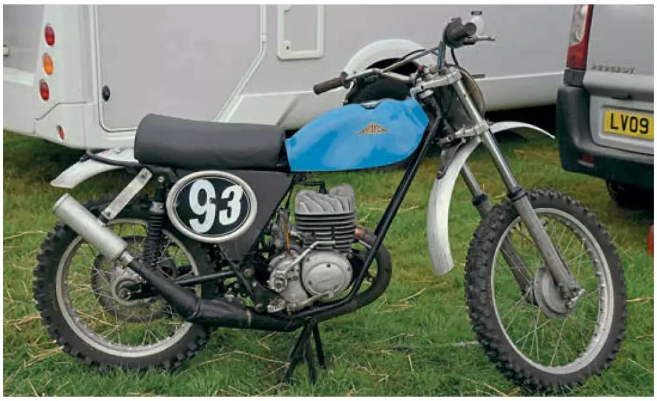
Neil Ruffle from Cannock in the Midlands glances at the camera while in the queue for the first practice of the pre74 class where he and his 250 Montesa were going quite well.

Left: Raymond Thomson smiles nicely for the camera before going out and getting his 490 Maico dirty…

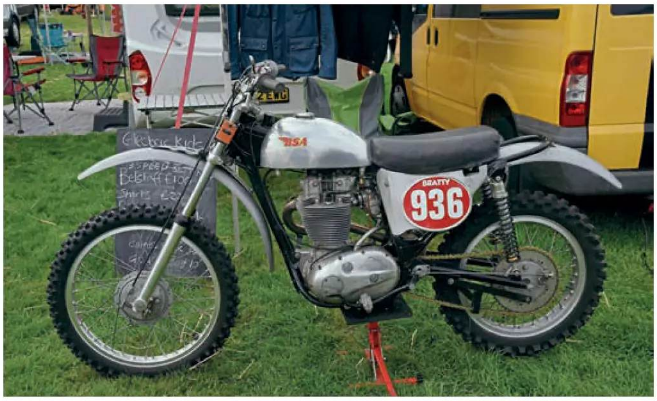
Right: … and showing the view a fair few competitors would see of him.

Left: Team Murphy: (from the left) Jess Mason, Shaun Murphy, Carter Burns and team manager Gary Murphy.

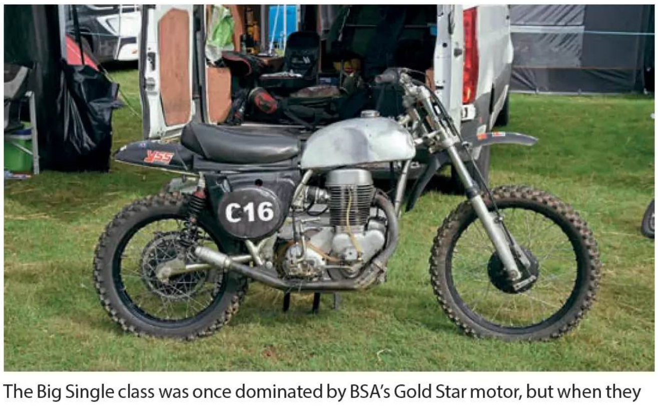
Right: It is a feature of paddocks everywhere, the bike for sale… This RM looked quite tidy… Did you buy it?



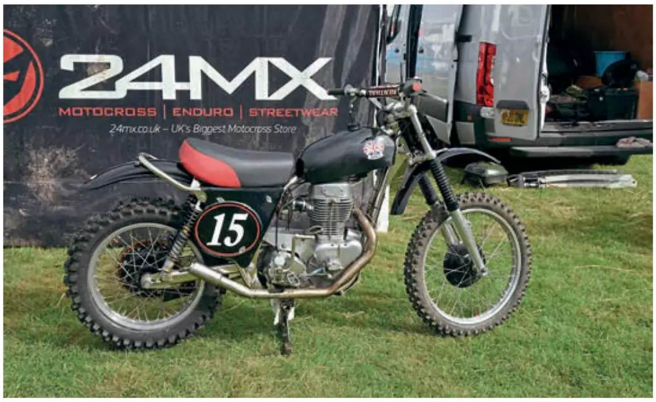
By the sixties, Cotton had become one of the many makers using Villiers engines to form the mainstay of their range; always well executed though, and nice looking, too.



Kevin Bratt's 500 Beezer is a good representation of the unit MXer from Small Heath; clean, tidy and showing a few upgrades.



The Big Single class was once dominated by BSA's Gold Star motor, but when they became harder to get, people looked at the Jawa or ESO speedway motor.



Matty Taylor headed up from Bath to race his Jawa Metisse.

Left: A feature of the paddock is fettling time. Team Mudie gets busy with the spanners on their 500 Husky.

Right: A bit of indulgence here: Steel Town Moto Worx hail from Steel Town – aka Consett – as does the editor.

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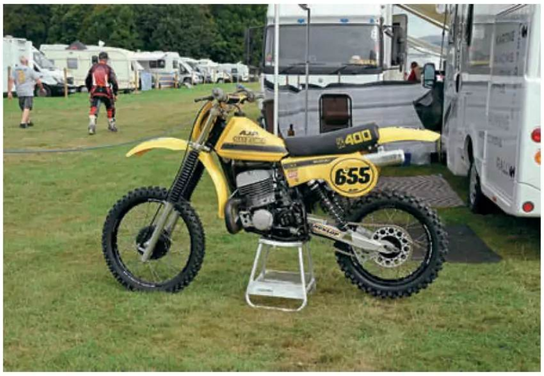
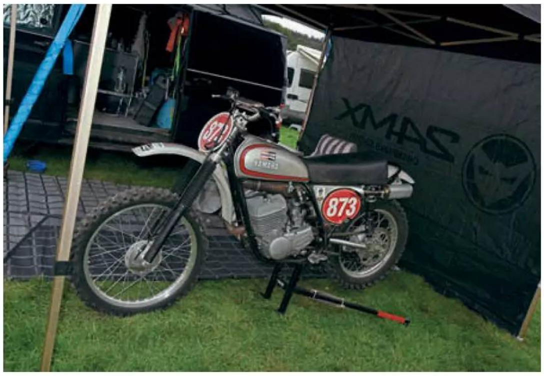


Left: Rob Prosser's 1979 RM400 looks stunning.

Right: Yamaha were one of the earliest Japanese manufacturers to embrace MX; they did it with their pre-mono bike like the one Nathan Jones was racing at Drumlanrig.



Racing is a family affair… Team Kelly at Drumlanrig.

It may be favouritism, but Gary Britton obviously survived his practice session…

Arran Murphy 95 and Andy Robinson 158, 250 and 125 Honda respectively show how the track was drying out.

Saturday morning practice, early, as riders explore just how slippery the grass surface is… Ace commentator Geoff Shuttleworth described it as 'green ice'.

KINGDOM OFF ROAD MOTORCYCLE CLUB

The world of motorcycling often suffers from bad press in the mainstream media, who focus on the negativity associated with our interest. This is why when someone goes out of their way to redress this balance it is to be applauded. At Drumlanrig there was a trials demo running throughout the weekend hosted by Kingdom Off Road Motorcycle Club, a registered Scottish Charity – SC042797 – based in Fife. Taking a chance to chat with programme co-ordinator Dave Paton, CDB got a bit of background on the club and its aims.

Set up in response to the anti-social behaviour of irresponsible riders who cause us all to be tarred with the same brush, the club tackles the issues head on by changing the perspective of those referred to them from other organisations. With practice tracks, workshops and coaching leading to active sport participation, the charity can cite major success in what they do while helping young people deal with modern life. The club is inclusive and can organise bespoke coaching for schools, youth groups, local authorities and corporates. Want to find out more? There is a Facebook page - KingdomOffRoadMotorcycleClub and a website -www.kingdomoffroad.co.uk

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Tyler at Kingdom Off Road Motorcycle Club…

…and fellow rider Toby demonstrate trials skills.

THE GALLOWAY MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Left: Yes, the racing was this close.

Right: Just in case you weren't sure which club it was hosting the event… Lone rider is Andrew McAlpin from Comer in Ireland.

The first corner… Where riders are full of eagerness and determined to be in front… Except all these others have the same idea.

Mark Kenny riding his 500 Honda in the Jimmy Ferguson Memorial Cup Over 50s race.

Husky leads Suzy in the pre84 Under 50s class.

RESULTS

Grass Track
Pre 68: 1 Harry Stitt, 2 David Wilson, 3 Ryan McMaster.
Pre 78: 1 Kris Winder, 2 Ian Stainton, 3 Chris Woodward.
Pre 84: 1 Mark Fulton, 2 Dave Salkeld, 3 Trevor Calderwood.
Evo 125s: 1 Graham Farish, 2 John Millar, 3 Iain Clarke.

Scramble
Pre 68: 1 James Thompson, 2 Lee Kelly, 3 Harry Stitt, 4 John Griffiths,
5 Liston Bell.
Pre 74 Up to 250: 1 Riley Copeland, 2 Kris Winder, 3 Dale Moreton.
Pre 74 Over 250: 1 Andy Hinchliffe, 2 Nathan Jones, 3 Ian Buchanan.
Pre 78: 1 James Hudson, 2 Chris Woodward, 3 Kyle McClure, 4 Steve Morgan, 5 Samuel Polakovic.
125 Twinshocks: 1 Mark Warttig, 2 Mike Allport, 3 Arron Roe.
250 Twinshocks: 1 Ryan Ireland, 2 Clark Davidson, 3 Arran Murphy.
125 Evos: 1 James Haddow, 2 Mike McClarty, 3 Richard Tancock.
Pre 84 Clubman: 1 Robert Smith, 2 Shaun Muir, 3 Eliot Palliser, 4 Richard Murdoch, 5 Adam Tabrett.
Pre 84 Over 60s: 1 Alan Bott, 2 Trevor Calderwood, 3 Andrew Barnes, 45 Chris Cannon.
Pre 84 Over 60s B: 1 Derek Adams, 2 David White, 3 Ade Dark.
Pre 84 Over 50s: 1 Mark Fulton, 2 Terry House, 3 Crag Smith, 4 Danny Blakeley, 5 Kevin Butcher.
Pre 84 Under 50s: 1 Brad Todd, 2 Martin Jones, 3 Graham Blacklock, 4 Matt Wells, 5 Michael Smith.
Classic Grand National Non-Qualifiers:
1 Ryan McMaster, 2 Mike Van Der Merwe, 3 Craig Holmes.
Pre 84 Grand National Non-Qualifiers:
1 Connor Paton, 2 Mark Glegge, 3 Andy Farr.
AMD Classic Grand National:
1 James Thompson, 2 Kris Winder, 3 Liston Bell.
AMD Pre 84 Grand National:
1 Brad Todd, 2 Graham Blacklock, 3 Martin Jones.

This could be David Lamb as the only '94' in the programme is David Lamb but on a Maico…

Left: Four JAP riders lead the pack: 26 is James Thompson, 111 is Harry Stitt, tucked in behind Harry is 33 John Griffiths, while 55 is Calum Pearson.

Right: No problems for any rider on the first corner… It isn't always so…

Below left: John Griffiths has been on the cover of CDB.

Below right: It isn't just Team Pearson who favour JAP power. Cheshire lad Sam Alderman goes well on his 620 JAP Wasp.

Adrian Lappin looking stylish as he heels into the bend…

…with Sam Alderman on his rear wheel.

Triumph Metisse were fabulous machines in the sixties, and in the hands of a good rider like Liston Bell are still good machines.

Ready for the trial, Fantic and Beta monoshocks.

Difference is in the detail… Two versions of a Suzuki RM 400.

Sorry John, they made me do it… They grabbed me, pulled me over and ordered me to take the pic… They're big lads, Messrs. Stitt, Lapin, Pearson and Thompson… I resisted as best I could, then they pulled a dirty one and offered me a Drumlanrig Dairies ice cream… It was all over then.

concours line-up shows just what a diverse interest there is in motorcycle restoration, so plenty going on, but the main focus is the scrambles or MX action.

Saturday had 24 races while Sunday saw 20, though each class on each day had at least two outings. In order to accommodate the needs of the sometimes widely differing classes, there were places where the courses were altered by deftly moving tapes and barriers. The work of a few moments but it made all the difference to the riders in those classes who had some of the trickier bits removed from their races.

The racing was close and exciting, but sometimes it was just nice to walk around the paddock and chat with riders doing what riders do when they're not holding the throttle wide on the course… Enjoy our selection of pics from the weekend. cdb

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CLASSIC BIKE·GUIDE SCOOTERING CLASSIC BIKE SHOWS

The Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show 2025

Twice a year the classic world descends on Stafford's county showground to celebrate the best in old motorcycles.

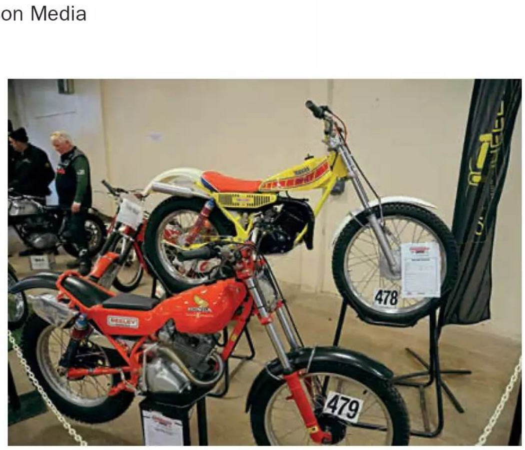
Words and **pics** James Robinson Media

What makes for a good show? Is it the bikes? Is it the owners who restore them? Is it the clubs who act as focal points for enthusiasts? Is it the enthusiasts themselves? Perhaps it is the associated auction? Or is it the guests of honour? Yeah, right, a trick question really as the answer is probably all of the above as they all play a part in a show's success. Without the bikes there is no show, without the restorers there are no bikes, and the club stands provide a gathering for enthusiasts from different parts of the country to meet and talk face-to-face which is always better than being on a social media thing.

There are many more elements to a show than

Above: Yamaha's YZ was a popular machine for club MX; these are all model 'J'.

Right: Colin Seeley and John Shirt took major manufacturers' trials machines and created legends. Seeley did Honda, Shirty did Yamaha. The Seeley won best trials bike at the show..



the main ones we've highlighted already as the show also provides a marketplace for suppliers and many enthusiasts will use the show to stock up on essentials for the workshop, bits and pieces for the forthcoming maintenance year, and check out what the latest special parts are being developed for their favourite machine.

Undoubtedly the presence of 500cc racing world champion Australian Wayne Gardner and multi-British racing champion Roger Marshall as guests will have attracted many enthusiasts to the show. Equally, there are those with an eye on a new bike who will have gone along to the auction to place a bid. As befits this later classic-focussed show, the auction highlights were Joey Dunlop's 1988 TT winning Honda RC30 and the same lad's 1999 Ulster GP winning Honda RC45. However, it is, at the end of the day, the enthusiasts who make the show with excellent restorations, and unbridled commitment to their favourite marque. Many enthusiasts would leave the show fired up with determination to have their restoration on show in 2026.

Top left: James trials bikes changed the face of the feet-up sport when Bill Lomas developed their model into a national trial-winning machine in the early fifties.

Top right: Best Scrambler went to Dave Lewis' 1994 Suzuki RM 125.

Below left: Triumph's Tiger Cub model has an excellent reputation in the trials world and, in Roy Peplow's hands, won the SSDT.

Below right: Nice restoration project, this James Commando seems to be complete.

Left: Velocette enduro and scrambles models in the auction.

Right: Plenty of enthusiasts with plenty to see.

Bottom right: Best in Show 1967 Kawasaki A7 Avenger with owner Paul Cann.

DIRT TALK

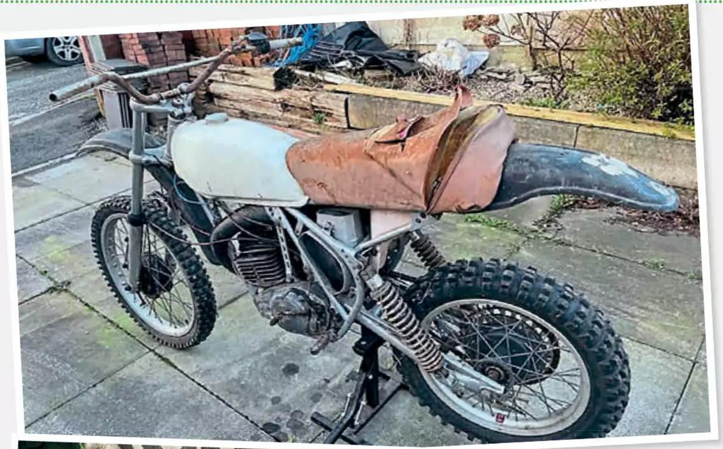
Write to us at: ClassicDIRTbike, PO Box99, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6LZ. Or email CDBeditor@mortons.co.uk

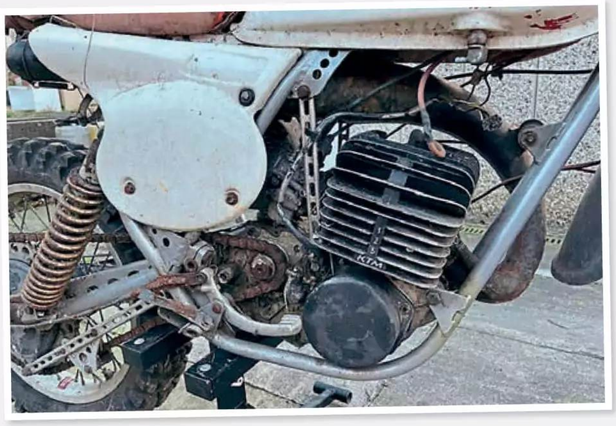
A Letters page is an interesting thing. What will readers write? What will they say? Whatever it is, read it here.

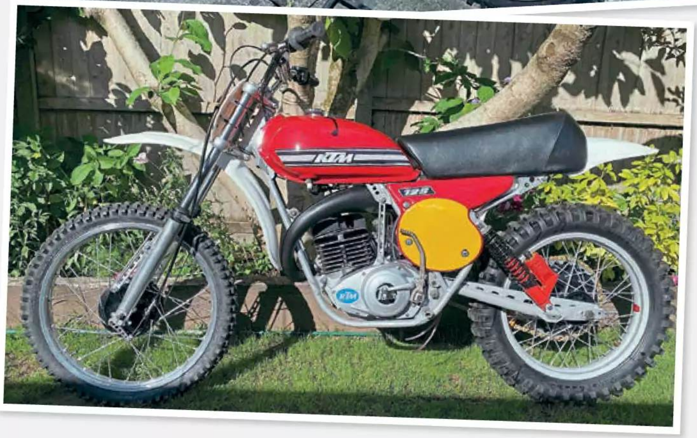
Restoration hobby

The latest issue of Classic Dirt Bike, with the fantastic looking KTM GS80 on the cover, was of particular interest because my own latest project is a KTM. It's a particularly rare KTM, an MC5, which was particularly rough when I got it.
I've restored a couple of classic motocross bikes as a hobby, and it is something I'd like to do full-time one day. I've attached some pics so you can see what I've done, and it would be an honour to see one of my bikes in your magazine.
Sean Acaster

Email
Sean, thank you for sending in the pics of your bikes, they look brilliant. Love to arrange a visit at some time to suit you. Tim







Time travel

I just enjoyed reading the latest issue which has taken me back 60 years and several thoughts have occurred to me, some of which you might like to share with your readers.

I recall the arrival of the-then new Montesa Cappras because one season I accompanied Mike Peach to meetings in the southeast, in return for which I used to clean his bikes after school on Monday evenings. He was a very capable privateer with both the 250 and 360 models and, I believe, a measure of support from the factory/importers. The colour of this new model was, as you state in the article, not as shown. In fact, it was much like the orange KTM colour to contrast with the white frame.

A cautionary note with regard to the Spanish Amals, as their parts are not always interchangeable with UK equipment. My first bike was a Montesa Impala Sport supplied by the-then importers Montala Motors from Dartford. These bikes came with minimal information - in Spanish - but there was no cold starting or choke device so starting was a bit daunting for a 16-year-old. I ordered a carburettor top with choke slide from a local supplier. The top fitted but the choke slide was too large to fit within the throttle slide. I never got to sort this as I passed my test, and larger bikes were available to me.

My Impala went through several owners locally before it became Mick Robinson's first race bike on which he won several awards. The last I saw of this bike was when I saw it displayed for sale at one of the London dealers (Rivetts? Revetts?), and I said to the salesperson that I believed the bike was ex Mick Robinson. Next week in MCN it was advertised as such, at a higher price!
Keep up the good work and more trials bikes please.
Roger Saunders

Email
I'll try and get more trials bikes in, Roger. Ironic for a trials rider, I do more enduro and MXers. Interesting bit, too, about the 'almost but not quite' the same for the Spanish and English Amals… Amal tend to go quiet when the Spanish connection is mentioned. Tim

Grass track fan

Great feature on Peter Collins in the latest edition of CDB. I know I have commented previously regards a feature on Brian Maxted; his grasstrack/speedway history is a remarkable one and could well fill a couple or three pages.

If of interest to you I will be happy to be the link with him.

Mitch Elliott

Email

Hi Mitch, yes, happy to be put in touch with Brian and your letter gives me a chance to use a pic of the lad, too, so thank you. Tim

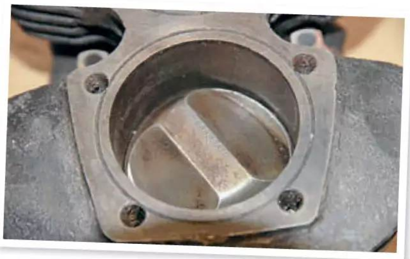
Detail difference

The latest issue of CDB includes a picture of your 500 cylinder fitted with E6884 pistons. These are 9.0 to 1 pistons, which have a crown profile to match the last design of cylinder head used by Triumph. The E4021 pistons you mention are also 9.0 to 1 but match the initial design of unit 500 cylinder head.

If you get chance to place both designs of 9.0 to 1 piston next to each other they will be noticeably different.

Hope this helps.

David Taylor



Email

Thanks David, it does help. These tasks we tackle tend to become a bit involved. It didn't help my case when originally I misread the part number on the piston crown and spent hours looking for something which didn't exist! Tim

Farm Bulto

I was brought up on a farm… a great playground for motorcycles though I'm not really a motorcyclist. My eldest brother was into road racing so there was always a gang of lads at the farm. One of these lads worked at the Midland Electricity Board and got wind of someone wanting to get rid of a bike, a Bultaco Bandido. This fellow had bought the Bandido for his son and the lad was trying to start it when it kicked back and somehow split his calf muscle. They were notorious for that unless you had a very heavy boot and leg. Anyway, he couldn't get rid of it fast enough, hence it ended up at the farm.

My brother and his mates thrashed around for a while then grew tired of it as they were more road racers, so it was parked up in 1974. My little brother fired it up in around 1976 and used it for a while before I took it over as a good way of going around on it checking the stock and generally thrashing it about.

After a while I parked it up, never to be looked at it again until Covid hit. More for something to do I dragged it out, pressure-washed it, cleaned the carb and put in fresh fuel and oil. It started fourth kick. The chap I was with muttered the words I wish I'd never heard: "You must restore it." So, with lots of expense and frustration we did. The problem is, I don't know much about the model or even who rode them, so what I do know about this particular one is scant and amounts to 'originated in Bristol'.

Richard Whittal-Williams

Email

Well, Richard, considering you claim not to be a motorcyclist and admit to knowing very little about the Bandido, the job you've done is fantastic. We did some digging and came across a test feature of the model in the sixties, which I hope filled in some detail. I'd love to feature it in the mag. Tim

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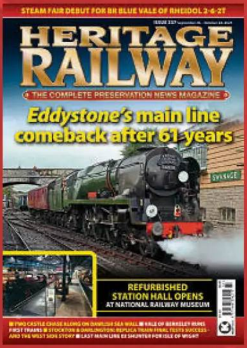
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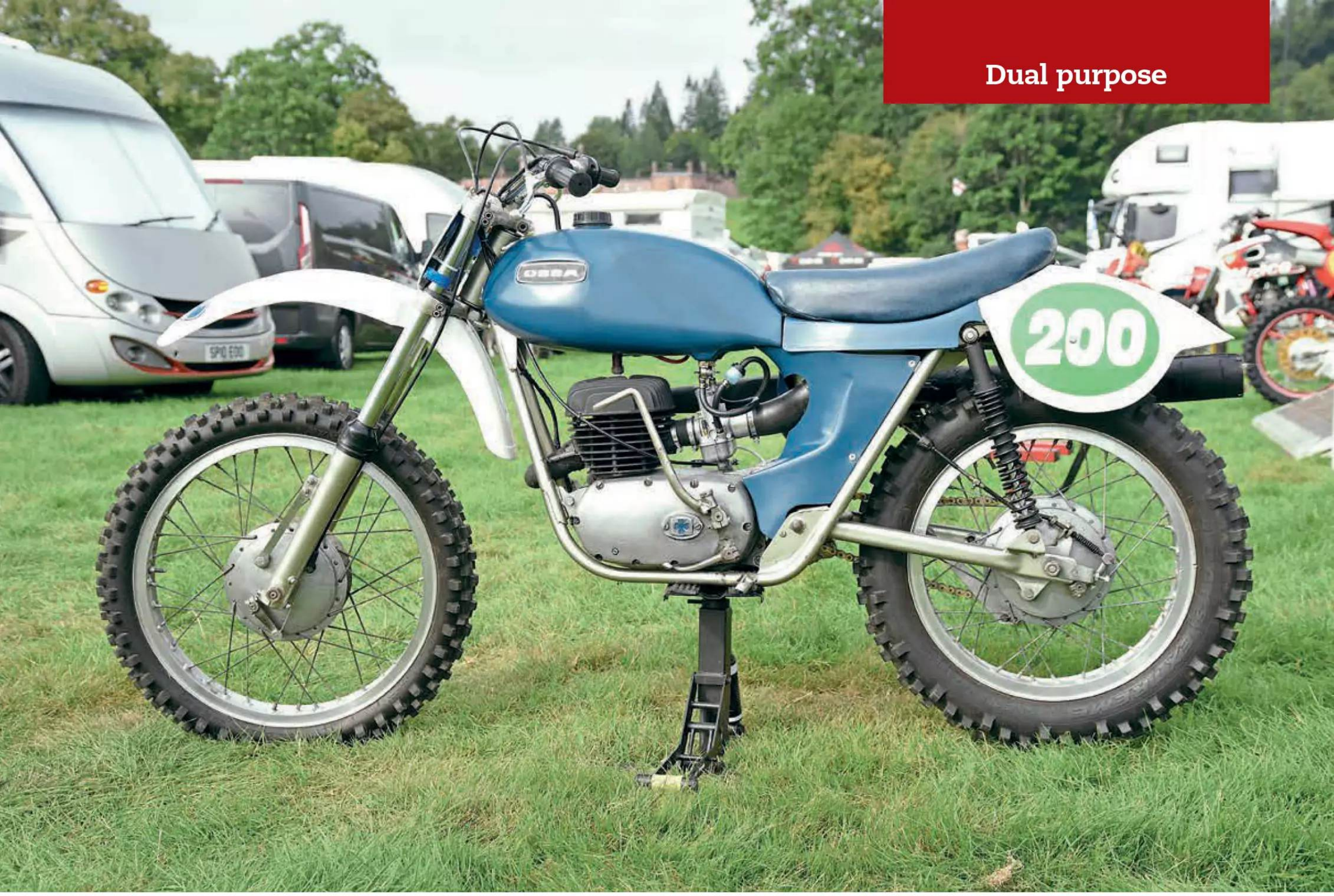


Dual purpose

OSSA were riding high in the early seventies with three SSDT wins under their belt; they were quietly popular in the ISDT, too.

Words and pics: Tim Britton Media Ltd

Compared to today with a multitude of classic enduro events available up and down the country, it is a wonder why the scene took so long to launch in the UK. There were always enduros – or Long Distance Trials – and the ISDT/E and Welsh events were always a feature of the UK press, but compared to scrambling or trials they were a low-key affair. That's a shame, because the sport combines the best of both trials and scrambles with few of the downsides recognised in each sport.

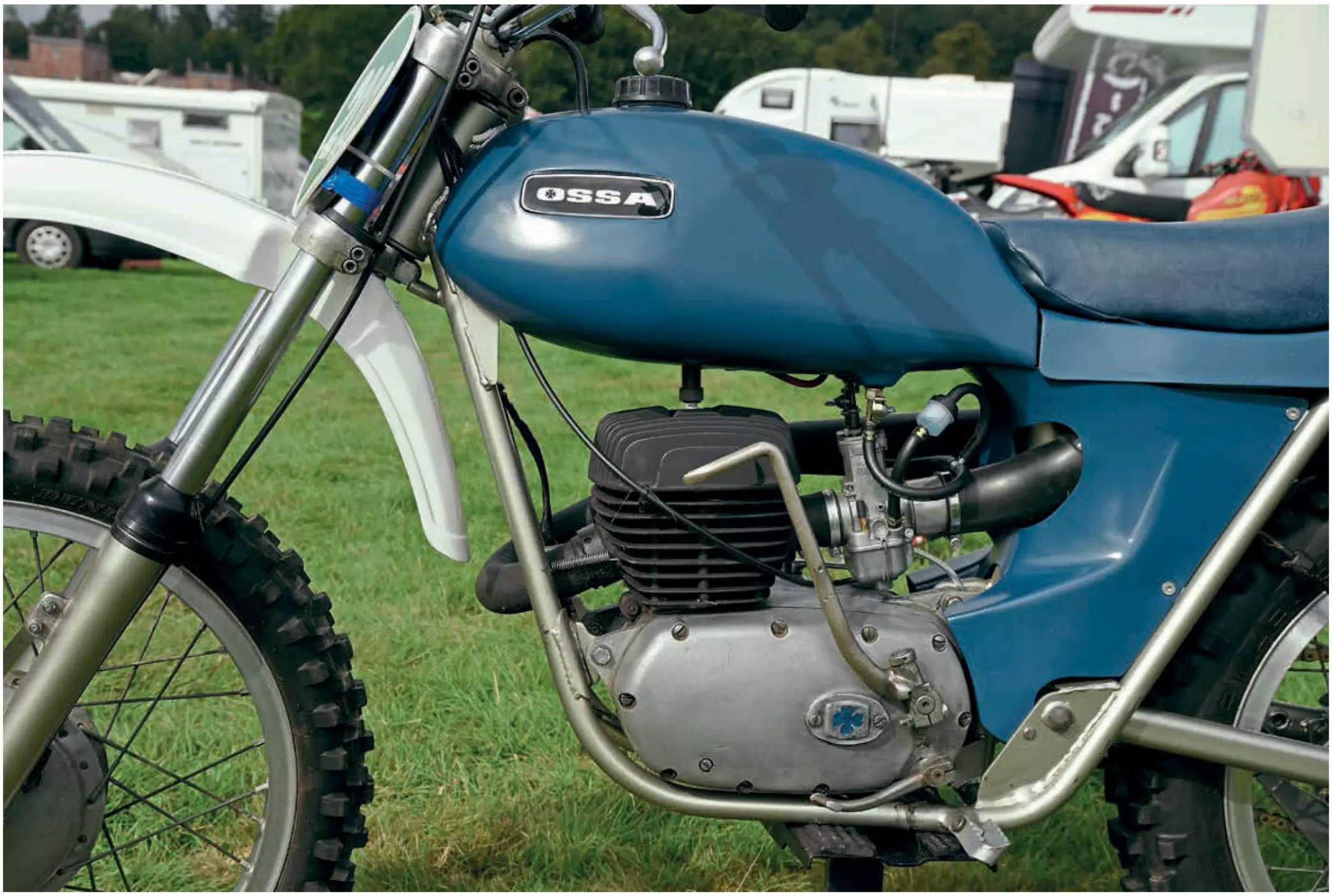
In the USA and mainland Europe things were slightly different and longer-distance 'trials' were more popular… Perhaps in those days there was access to larger areas of land. I remember one Christmas a book was given to me as a present, a book which could only have been chosen by a parent with knowledge of motorcycle sport. In it were descriptions of the kind of sports popular elsewhere in the world, one such having been described as The Long Distance Time Trial, but these days more likely known as a timecard enduro.

In the section on this sport were pics of riders in European forests and mountains tackling a variety of terrain on motorcycles different to the trials bikes which were my main focus of the day. To my young eyes they seemed to be scramblers with lights, even though the two sports had different requirements. Which sort of brings us to the smart blue OSSA pictured here in the paddock at Drumlanrig earlier in 2025. It caught my eye for a couple of reasons. It's a smart-looking machine and a bit of a rarity as the Spanish company's products are not as common on the classic MX circuit as certain other marques. As I looked the bike over, its owner, Albert Britton – no relation to the editor – clambered out of his van and joined me. My first thought was, 'It's a Phantom' and said so to Albert, who replied: "Er no, it's a Six-Day replica enduro model."

If you're familiar with the OSSA enduro range then the Pioneer is the mainstay of it, and when OSSA finished well in the 1973 USA-based ISDT the company upgraded the styling of the Pioneer and called it the SDR or Six-Day Replica. A visually stunning machine with beautiful white plastics offset by a distinctive red stripe, the SDR really looked the part. Unfortunately, it was a one-year-only model as the SDR – model year which went from 1973 to 1974 rather than calendar year –and it dropped back to the 'Pioneer' name for the following model year. Equally, if you're familiar with the OSSA range then you'll know the Phantom was blue… which is why Albert's bike is blue. So, what's the tale here, then?

Above: Devoid of its enduro gear, the SDR looks right for the MX circuit.

▶



Albert got the bike in 1990. "I paid £200 for it," he tells me, "and I was intending to use it in the Scottish championship. In fact, I did ride it for a couple of meetings but realised it needed quite a bit of work." While not a disappointment per se, the bike was clearly tired so over the winter of 1990 Albert pulled it apart and went through it to see if it could go a bit better. This is when all the enduro equipment was removed; he still has it safely stored and is planning on refitting it for vintage enduro events in the future.

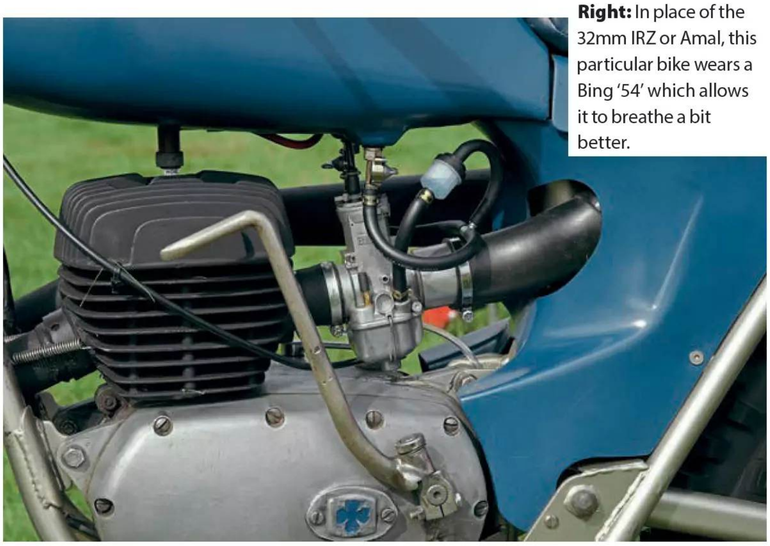
The winter workshop involved checking over the engine to see if anything major was needed (it wasn't,

▶

Above: OSSA's engine is a neat and tidy looking unit. The long kickstarter means the bike fires up quickly.

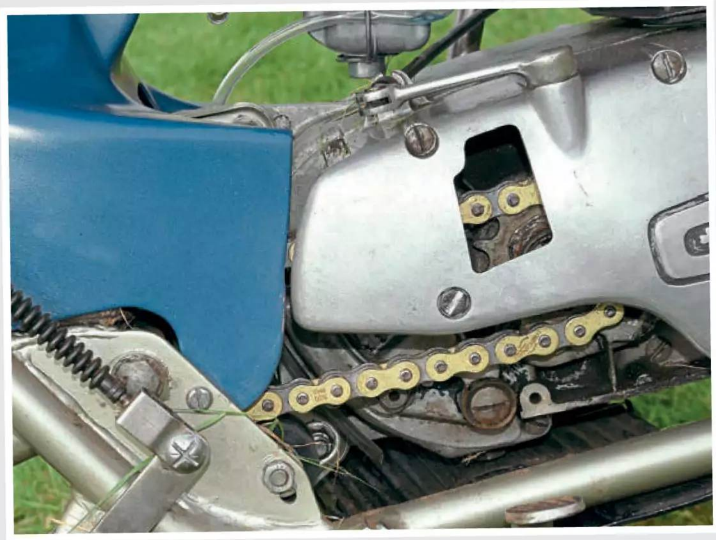
Left: For this machine OSSA used Telesco forks. They would have Betors on other models.

Right: In place of the 32mm IRZ or Amal, this particular bike wears a Bing '54' which allows it to breathe a bit better.



TEAM BIKE

Shortly after Albert got this OSSA in the nineties he was at an event and Trevor Haye, who was part of Scotland's ISDT squads in 1973 and 1974, was checking it over. Trevor reckoned it was an ex-team bike and was likely ridden by either himself or fellow team member Jackie Williamson. One of the more obvious clues was the hole cut in the flywheel case which allowed muck to clear itself out of the back of the case. On its own this wouldn't be a decider as it's easy enough to cut a hole, and many riders did just that on their own bikes. However, allied with how uncommon the SDR is in the UK and a few other touches here and there, plus the provenance of where it came from, suggests this is either Trevor or Jackie's bike.



Above: Rear brake is a 6in sls drum. The cable is original and easily adjusts the brake.

Middle: The original airbox was long gone and in the first rebuild they weren't available, but are now.

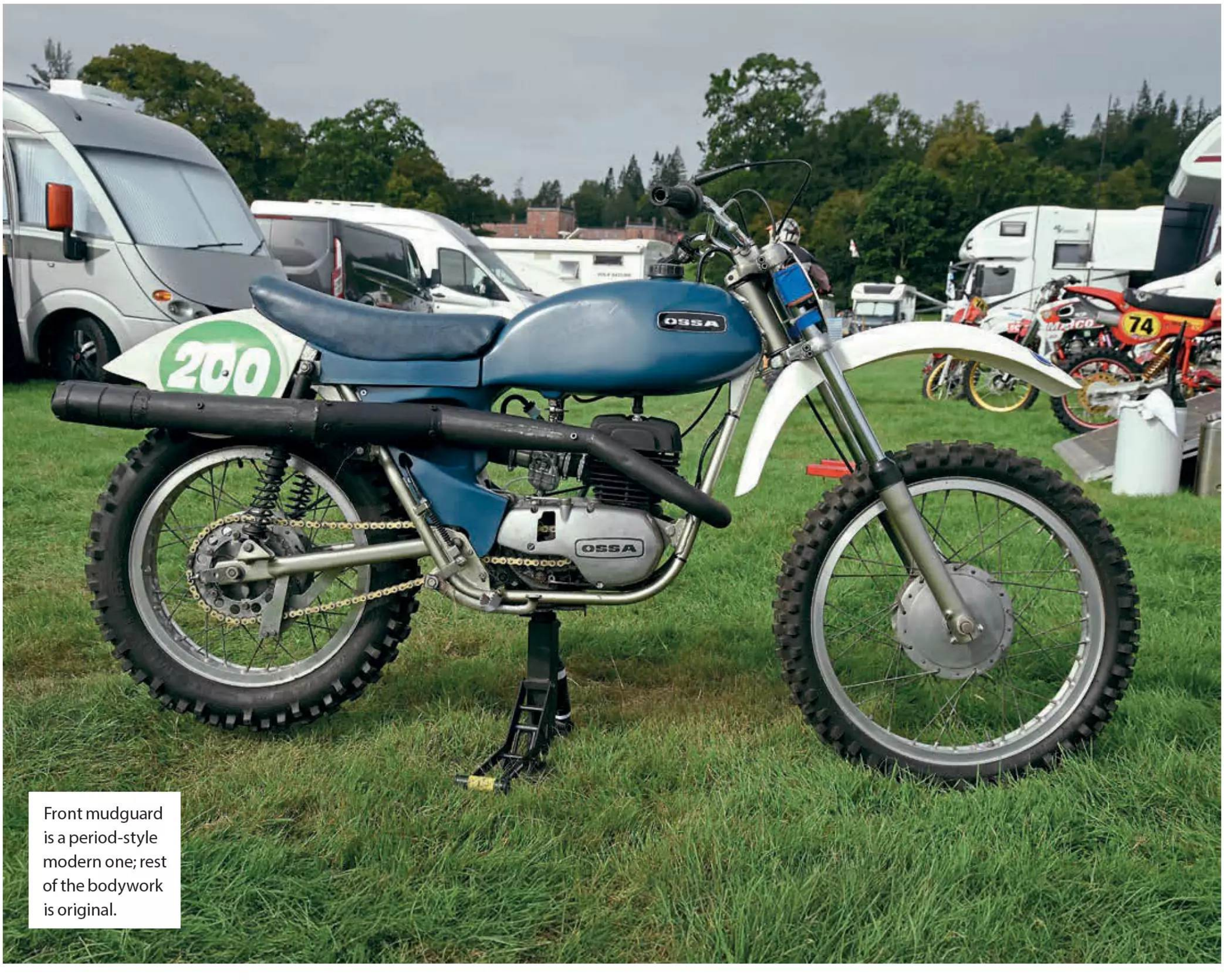
left: Amal levers are what would have been on.

ALBERT BRITTON

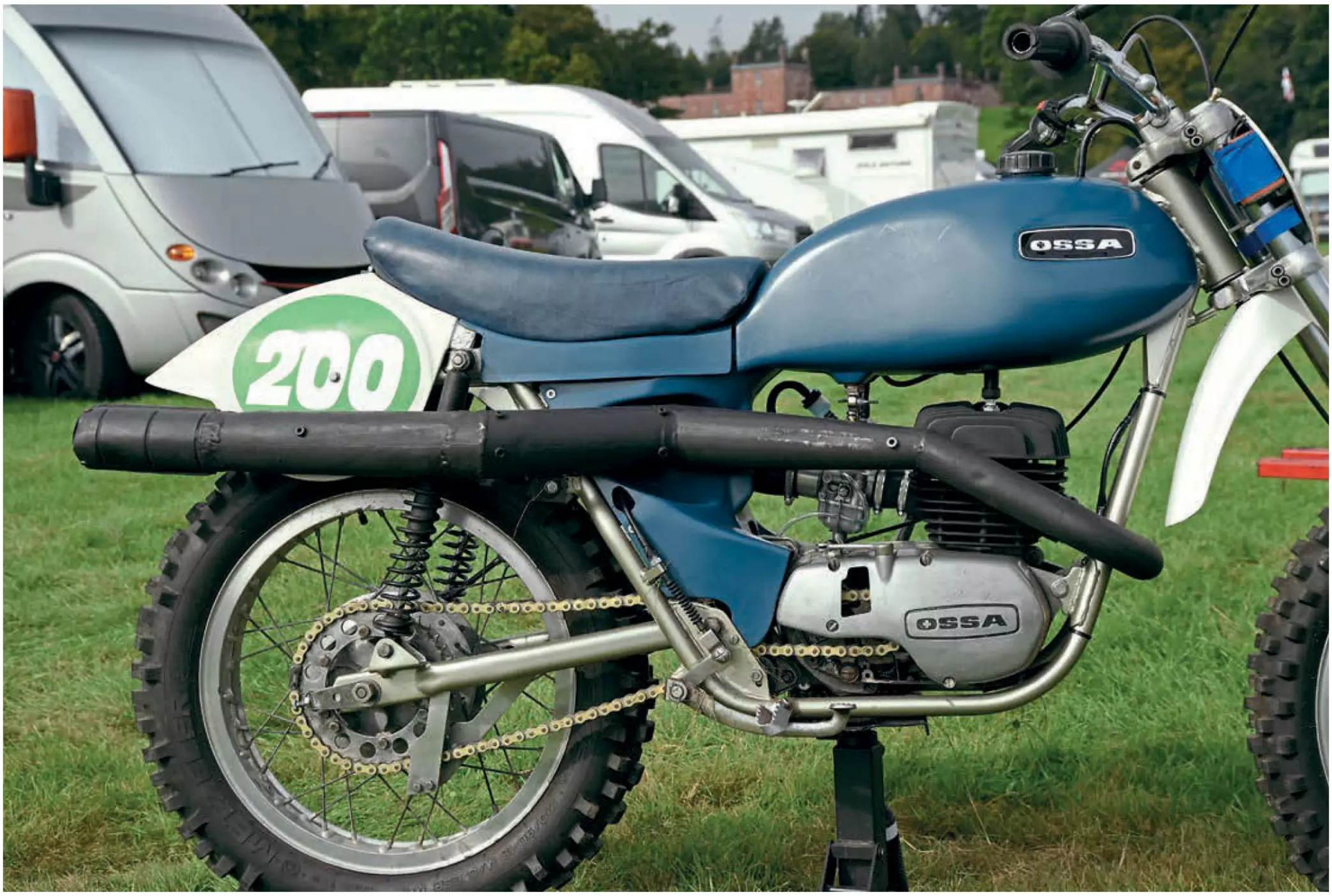
For Albert Britton, the road to riding in the dirt began with a step-through Honda 50 before progressing to a 150cc Honda twin with MX wheels fitted. "It got me out there," grins the 66-year-old laboratory technician who calibrates equipment for engineers as a day job. Since those far-off days Albert has tried pretty much every bit of off-road sport and is intending to try the OSSA in the vintage enduro world, too. In fact, an enduro model surfaces as his favourite bike of all time: a Kawasaki KDX200. "I had one in 1988," he says. "IT was my bike for over 10 years. "Albert is a long-time member of the Scottish Classic Scrambles Club. "I've been riding under their banner since the eighties," he says.

Albert Britton with his 1973 SDR ready for action in the pre74 class at Drumlanrig.

Albert in action circa 1990… The OSSA has Betor forks and a MAR front wheel on in this picture.



Front mudguard is a period-style modern one; rest of the bodywork is original.



Above: Once the exhaust had been cleaned out the bike had a lot more performance.

which was a good thing) and cleaning out the exhaust. This is a major part of two-stroke servicing as the exhaust chokes up with carbon from two-stroke oil and effectively strangles the engine. By all accounts, this exhaust was pretty well packed with cr… er… carbon. Yes, let's say carbon. With the bike in bits, there was a chance to tidy the bodywork as it was looking somewhat secondhand, Albert wasn't going to use it in enduro, so as a tribute to the Phantom he decided to go with a blue colour which is nice enough but not quite the correct shade.

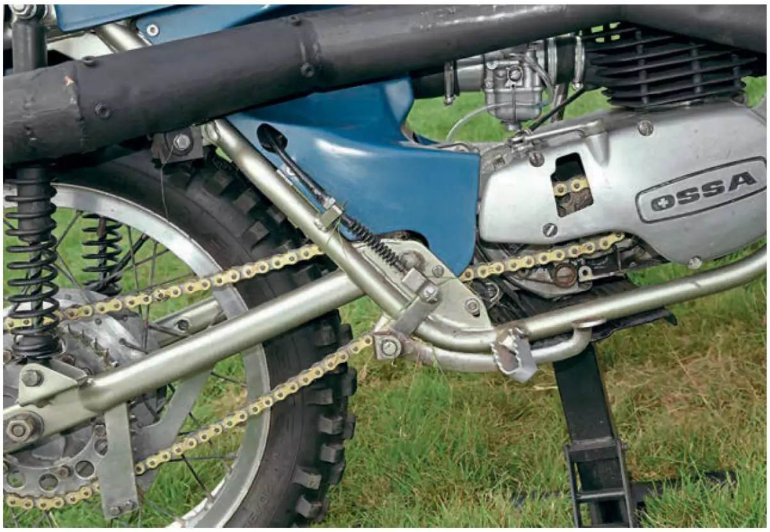
Given how hard it had been used, the engine was fully stripped and checked over meticulously before being reassembled with new bearings and seals throughout. "The crank was done with a new big end and piston and rings at the top end, Also, I fitted new points and condenser…" "What?" He stopped there at my expression. "I thought OSSA were the champions of electronic ignition," I gasped, adding: "My MAR was certainly on CDi…" Albert continued: "Yes, it should actually be on CDi but at some time in the past it's been changed to a points set up." Maybe this is a throwback to its life as an ISDT machine. You see, this new-fangled electronickery wasn't fully trusted back then and cries of, 'Well, it can't be fixed if it goes wrong' were common… Yes, this is true, but it didn't often go wrong.

Once assembled, it got fresh oil in the engine and forks, too. "I did change the carburettor back

Below: Sprocket is original, chain isn't.

LUCKY OR WHAT?

OSSA's stylised logo looks like it has a four-leaf clover in the centre of the 'O', and I'm not the only person who was of the clover-leaf opinion until it was pointed out that the logo is actually a movie film projector. OSSA's entry to the manufacturing world came with film projectors in the twenties – the 1920s, so almost a century ago – when Manuel Giro began making projectors for the Spanish market. OSSA actually stands for Orpheo Sincronic Sociedad Anónima. It would be Manuel's son Eduardo who would guide the company to motorcycle success in pretty much every sphere of our sport, despite the company's fortunes having been up and down during the late seventies and early eighties, and it closed in 1982.



1973 OSSA SDR

Engine: Single-cylinder two-stroke
Bore x Stroke: 72mm x 60mm
Capacity: 244cc
C.R. 10:1
Power: 26bhp
Carburettor: Bing 54 (IRZ or Amal 32mm original)
Ignition: Points and condenser (Motoplat CDi original)
Clutch: Multiplate wet
Front Suspension: Telesco 6.5in travel
Rear Suspension: Betor 4in travel (Telesco original)
Brakes: 6in dia sls front and rear
Front Wheel: 3.00in x 21in
Rear Wheel: 4.50in x 18in
Weight: 254lb with 1gal fuel

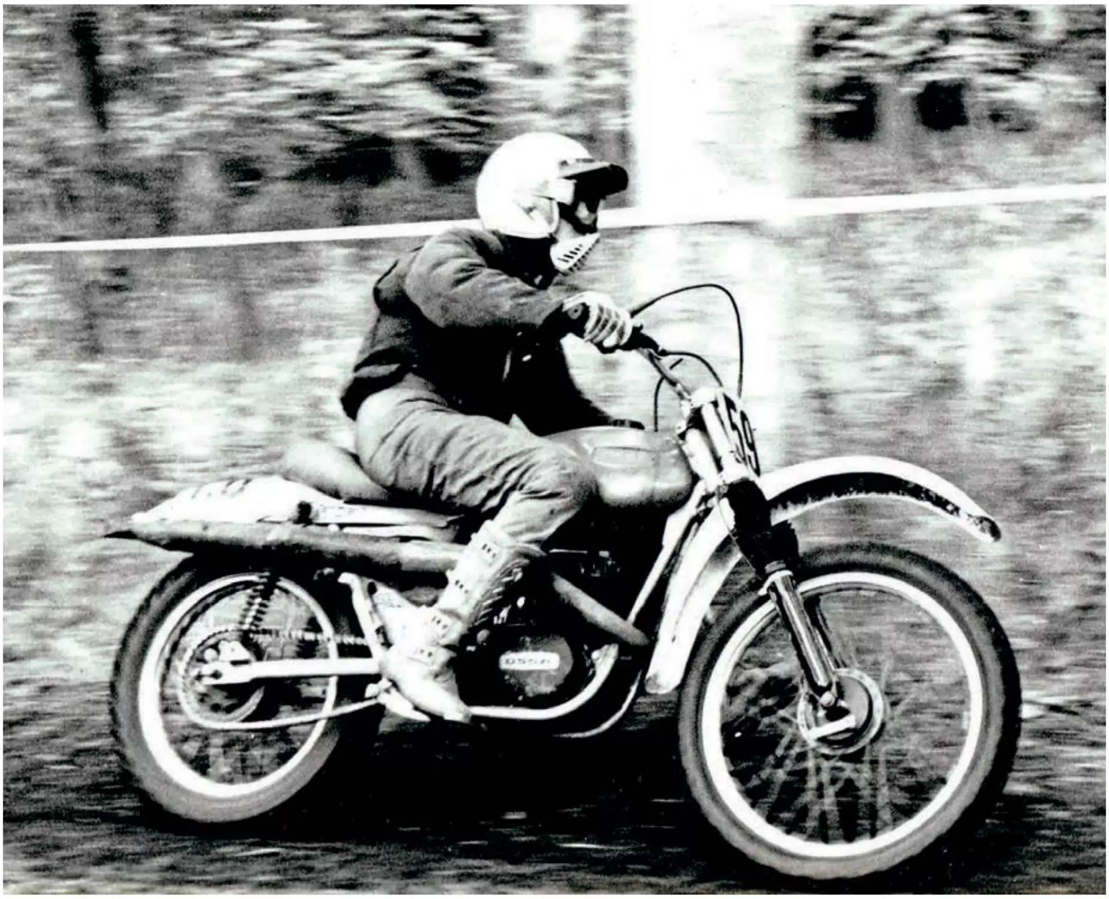
Above: The inspection hole in the case is one clue to its team origins.

Below right: Albert in action circa 1990… The OSSA has Betor forks and a MAR front wheel on in this picture.

then," Albert tells me. "It came with an Amal on it, but OSSA also used IRZ in those days. It was a bit worn so I fitted a larger Bing '54' and this, coupled with the exhaust actually being able to breathe, made the bike a lot better."

It was so much better that he managed a few wins in 1991. "It was mainly in the under-300cc class, and I was capacity champion in 1991." The OSSA was in use again in 1992, but Albert found the Spanish bike being outpaced by some of the Japanese machines. "At the end of 1992 I bought a TM Suzuki, which my brother Gary was riding at Drumlanrig, though in retrospect I maybe should have persevered with the OSSA a bit longer." Anyway, the OSSA was cleaned off, stripped and carefully stored in boxes in Albert's attic, ready for the day when he would rebuild it.

This is often the fate for many a machine and few see action with the owner again as they're moved on to pastures new, still in their boxes. Not so here, as fate took a hand. "I was racing a YZ400 and thought I'd enter the pre78 class at Drumlanrig, but by the time I got to do it there were no places left although there were some in the pre74 class, so the bike was hauled out of the attic and into the workshop," he says. It was actually in quite good condition thanks to the work which had been done 33 years earlier, plus the careful storage. "I still stripped the engine," says Albert, "and it got new crank seals and



rings, but the piston and bore simply needed cleaning. Once back together with fresh oil and petrol it only took a few kicks to fire it up."

Despite the non-standard colour, the rest of the bike is remarkably standard, especially the bodywork, often the first bits damaged in a comp bike's life. "The front mudguard is a modern replica which looks okay," says Albert, "but the rest is in good order and what would have been on when it was new." To my 'Is there anything different from standard on it?' question the reply was: "No, not really. The rear dampers were new in 1990 but were Betor, same as was on when I got the bike, though I believe they would have been Telesco units when the bike was new."

Albert tells me the wheels still run on the original rims, though the spokes have been checked, and there're new bearings in the 6-inch diameter hubs, but the brake shoes were okay for reuse. In keeping with the enduro origins of the SDR rather than MX rubber on the rims, the bike wears Metzeler 6-Day enduro tyres. Up at the front end the Telesco forks are as they should be; the chrome on the stanchions was in excellent condition, and even the fork springs were okay, perhaps changed in the nineties, Albert? "Maybe," he grins, and tells me they had fresh seals in to hold the modern suspension fluid.

There does seem to be a slight difference with the fork caps which on this bike have air valves in whereas in the day they were plain. The legs themselves are secured in alloy yokes which keep them straight and true. On the top yoke are the 'bars which came with the bike in 1990, Albert has a feeling that, if not original, they are certainly to original style. Looking at pics of period SDRs this doesn't seem an unreasonable thought. On the 'bars are Amal alloy levers which it would have worn when new, and surprisingly the throttle is also original… Generally, it doesn't take much of an 'off' to damage these seventies-period twistgrips but no, this one came with the bike and is still on.

As we chatted about his bike, Albert added: "I had the seat reupholstered in 1991, using a blue cover and the original foam by an upholsterer who was based in the adjacent unit to where I was working; it's still good so has been left. The one bit not on the bike when I got it was the airbox. I've no idea what happened to it, but it wasn't there, nor could I find one back then, so I had to make something to do the job." It seems that recently, reproduction airboxes to the correct style have become available and it is likely when the mag comes out the bike will actually be wearing one. cdb

Below: Scotland's 1974 ISDT squad.

SCOTLAND ISDT 19 74 ITALY

MOTO MEMORIES

FIRSTTIME CHAMP

It is perhaps inevitable that a rider with the surname 'LaPorte' is going to attract 'door' references when being written about, and Danny 'The Door' LaPorte certainly provided ammunition for a whole host of them at the 1982 250cc British GP. The Californian racer was in his first season in world championship racing but was far from inexperienced. A full-time MX professional since the age of 16, LaPorte's rise to success was almost meteoric. There was a slight hiccup when by his own admission Danny felt burned out due to racing, but seeing the MX associated with Evel Knievel's Snake River Canyon jump convinced him to get back on the trail.

This he did with such success he had Suzuki knocking on his door and saying: "Come race with us," which resulted in a third place in the 125 AMA championship. His tenacity undoubtedly made the opposition sit up and take notice as he was within a whisker of being 125 champion in 1977. LaPorte and Broc Glover were tied on points going into the last race; the opposition flooded the entry with team riders to ensure a Glover win.

LaPorte moved up to the 500cc class and finished 1979 as AMA 500cc champion, but then began to look for a new challenge. Being part of the MX des Nations USA team in 1981, a team which launched USA's domination of the event, showed him where the new challenge would be. For 1982 he was Yamaha mounted and on the 250 world championship stage. Not expected to do well in his first year, the smart money was on Georges Jobe. LaPorte was regarded as being in his learning period… Unfortunately, no one mentioned this to the Californian as he set about to become world champion.

Our pic comes from the British GP at Hawkstone Park where the championship door was thrown wide open. LaPorte was second in the first heat behind Kees van der Ven and he reversed this in the second heat to be declared overall winner of the 1982 British 250cc MX GP. Thanks to this success, Danny LaPorte was now second in the world series, a mere two points behind Kees van der Ven, though had LaPorte's compatriot Mike Guerra managed to hang on to second place, Danny would have been on top of the world. Eventually, he would win the 1982 title but would move on to rally raids as he looked for a new challenge.

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